OLD AYRSHIRE DAYS

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Old Ayrshire Days

BY

WILLIAM ROBERTSON

AUTHOR OF "THE KINGS OF CARRICK," "HISTORICAL TALES AND LEGENDS OF AYRSHIRE," "AULD AYR," "THE DULE TREE OF CASSILLIS," ETC.

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OLD AYRSHIRE DAYS

INTRODUCTION

"OLD AYRSHIRE DAYS" is a book of the Shire: of a shire of old renown. It is an attempt to recall the years of the generations that have, many of them, long ago given in their account, and the men who already stand in their lot; an effort to comprehend in some measure the spirit that broods over the county and that gives life and presence to the slumbering fathers.

To know the strivings of this spirit, one requires to take a much wider outlook than any that can be had from the most favoured of Ayrshire hill-tops. He must stand on one of the outlooks of Time, with the historical scroll of the county in his hand, and cast his eyes and his thoughts backwards over a vista whose further horizon is shrouded in the enveloping mists of long ago, and watch the procession of struggling mortals as it emerges from the place of shades. Great and manifold is the procession, and great and manifold are the strivings

and the warrings which it must perforce encounter by the way. It comes into the light, the full daylight of history writ with pen, fighting. It is appointed to all men to die; and as for the race, it is appointed to it with equal inevitableness to fight. It is no continuing city, it is no placid Ayrshire across whose fields one must look if he would see it as it was, but an Ayrshire of warring races and forces, and powers and faiths and families, every inch of the way contending, some of them passing away to be no more seen of the human eye, some of them hardly enduring, some of them leaving their influences behind them as the evidence of their completed sojourn, some of them beaten off as warriors are beaten off on the field of conflict, and some of them pursuing their victorious march, and swinging along the historical highway as men endowed to give account of themselves. The procession is endless, and varied as it is endless: Celt and Roman; Pict and Scot and lowland Briton; men of crannogs and of peels, and of stately towers that have long since crumbled to the touch of the decaying fingers of the trying centuries and the testing weathers; lonely wanderers from Icolmkill; stern fighters for Scotland's right and Scotland's might, and the glorious privilege of being independent; men of caves and moss-hags, of muirlands and hillsides, of rightful claiming for civil and religious liberty;

invaders coming with blast of trumpet and tuck of drum, and beaten backward in riot and confusion and defeat; a succession of Ayrshire families, slaying and slaughtering, fighting and foraging, burning and devastating in their conflicts with one another for territorial supremacy and influence, yet all ready enough, when national necessity called, to respond to the summons of monarch and of country; and after them, other groups and clusters and bands, each in its own way trying with all its might to demonstrate its own inherent fitness, and so, in deed or in word, to survive.

It winds, this shadowy procession, by many a brake and tortuous route. It goes down—down—sometimes very deep into the Valley of the Shadow. There, in the gloom, sometimes in the gloaming, sometimes in the face of the sun, sometimes in the black and dark night, there are men warring, fighting, agonising. You can almost hear their cryings and their groanings, and witness their contendings; and if only you care to watch them long enough, you will find that they emerge on the hither side of their shadowy vale. Need was that they must win through, and they won through. They dwelt in castle and peel and town. They were of the men of the sword, the spear, the shield. They fought in feuds, in frays, in forays. They were raiders of the

moonlight and of the deep and dark night. They struck for liberty and faith, and for their fellow-men.

The man is not born who can assimilate the whole story of Ayrshire, but most of us are more or less conscious, perhaps dimly conscious, of its influences. These are upon us, about us, around us. We stand by Loudoun Hill, and there troop before us the English forces, bands playing and banners flying, and, even as we look, they go down in rout or in death before the long Scottish spears of the Bruce and his band of heroes. We are by the shore of Largs, and we see the sea horizon flecked by the white sails of Acho the Norseman, sib to the Immortals, hither bound, this Protector of Thrones, west from the streams of Gotelfa; and there break the storms upon the goodly fleet, and the galleys begin to strand upon the Ayrshire coast, and the battle is fought, and Acho sails away to die broken-hearted at Kirkwall, and to lie stark and stiff the winter through in front of the high altar of the Cathedral of St. Magnus. On the streets of Ayr we join company with Wallace wight, and watch the reddening of the night sky to the burning of the barns.

All over the shire you can find the historical landmarks that the fathers have set up. The hills that rise, the rivers that flow, the plains that stretch, the towns that are instinct with

human life, all have their own story to tell. All these are ready to cry out if the men of to-day should be false to the worthier and better traditions of the county. And there is song, and there is a story everywhere.

THE SHIRE'S GREY FATHERS

To deal anything like faithfully with the antiquities of the county of Ayr, one would require to write a good deal of the ancient history of the shire itself. He would have to pause, perforce, in front of many a ruined castle or keep, and ask of it to reveal its secrets; he would have to attempt in measure the annihilation of many centuries, and to go back to the days when the long-decayed peels were instinct with life, and throbbing with the joys and sorrows that have been the lot of mortal man from the beginning down till now. He would have to remember when the monasteries flourished—these early seats of piety and of learning—and when as yet the Mother Church had all the land to herself. He would have to hark away back to the days of the lake-dwellers—these builders of wonderful homes—who, with their fire and their stone axes and their rude spears, and their marvellous ingenuity and patience in the application of natural means to the overcoming of obstacles played their part in the conquest of the wilds and the unoccupied lands, and the remains of

whose crannogs are still there to tell us how they lived and dressed, and wrought and hunted, and how their dug-out canoes cleft the flashing waters of the inland lochs and lakes. He would have to bring the Roman back to the shire—that marvellous conqueror of all sorts and conditions of circumstances—who, in the fulness of his own time, carried the eagles of the city of the Tiber to these western shores and highways, and places of habitation, and introduced upon the primitive life of the Celtic tribes that were before him the culture, the civilisation, the discipline, the law, and the engineering skill and adaptability of his race and people. And he would have to go further back still than the Roman; back to the days of these same Celtic tribes, no mean progenitors for any race to have, men of courage and daring, who fought tribe with tribe, because it was the way of the world in their days, as indeed it is in ours, and who in their generation no doubt struggled on towards the light in the best way that they could, fearing God, and doing the right as they knew how, and passing on their heritage of responsibility to those who should succeed them.

The point need hardly be elaborated that a great mystery veils the larger part of the more ancient antiquities, and it is most unfortunately

the case that, in many instances, what might have been most valuable "finds" have, in earlier days than ours, been rendered useless for educative purposes by the vandalism of the discoverers and the absence of anything like dependable record. A tumulus was, a century back, to the great mass of the people a "queer mound"; it was a remain of "the ancient inhabitants of the country"; it had something heathenish about it; and if it was not destroyed wholly without mercy, it was destroyed all the same, the urns were broken, their contents disappeared, and the relics went into private ownership, where, as in the case of a great deal of such ownership, their story was lost, and they were permitted to disappear from ken. In his never-to-be-forgotten ride into Carrick, Tam-o'-Shanter passed the cairn where hunters found the murdered bairn. There are very few persons remaining who could tell exactly where the cairn stood. Originally, it had been erected to mark a grave. Its contents were rifled early last century in the course of some agricultural operations. There were urns in it, and bones. In all probability, it was the sepulchre of some great Celtic chief; it may have marked even the spot where he fell in some bloody encounter. Scots or Britons may have chanted a death-song round the pyre that was the scene of a

primitive cremation. But the disturbers of the dust of the long-dead warrior thought not, or thought little of such things. The cairn was despoiled, the humble sanctuary desecrated, and the probability is that the fact of its very existence would have been wholly forgotten had not Burns made the place notable by associating it with the finding of a murdered child. This was but one incident in the many that must have occurred in the days when antiquarian research was little esteemed, and when antiquaries were looked upon as "characters," decent enough in their way, but dwelling, in this particular trait, on the verge of daftness.

Many such tumuli have been discovered in the shire. In the parish of Ochiltree, at a place called the Moat, "a few years" prior to 1837 "an urn was found, with calcined bones." That is practically the whole story, as told in the new Statistical Account. Who can tell what romance, or what story, may not have been enclosed in that solitary urn? The probability is that he was no common person to whom the honour of burning had been done by his contemporaries. Kyle, no doubt, knew him, and, when yet there was forest abounding and men were striving to determine to whom the land should belong, his fame may have reached from the uplands of Muirkirk to the sea. But what of that now? His memory

and his name are gone, alike unknowing and unknown, and his ashes have been blown to the four winds of heaven. Various tumuli have been unearthed in the parish of West Kilbride, in which, according to the prosaically told story of the parish minister in 1837, "were found urns containing calcined human bones and ashes. Near the Castlehill, at Seamill," he continues, "about four years ago, whilst the new line of the coast road was being executed, two entire urns of this sort were dug out in a stratum of gravel about 3 feet below the surface, but without the addition of any mound being raised over them. One of these, it is believed, has since been deposited in Anderson's Institution in Glasgow. These urns were formed of coarse red clay, of very rude manufacture, yet well-proportioned and modelled in the vase form. In hardening, the fire appears to have been applied solely to the inside of the urn, that part being changed to a dark colour, whilst the outside remains of the natural red." Here, again, we stand by the tombs of the ancients, and can recognise the loving care that gave these dead honourable interment. All along this shore the ground is classic. It is said to have known the Dane; it knew the Norse Vikings; within easy reach of West Kilbride the Romans built their villas; many a stiff conflict may have been fought

in the vicinity; and it may have been after some stiff encounter that the ashes of the dead were reverentially placed in the urn and consigned to the keeping of mother earth.

In 1832, according to the Rev. Dr. Landsborough, the then minister of Stevenston parish, when some labourers were levelling a sandy field at Dubbs they came upon a regularly-laid causeway about 5 feet beneath the surface, 6 yards in length by 2 feet in breadth. Across the one end of it lay a stone about a ton in weight; at the other end was a stone cist, or coffin, 3 feet long by 2 broad, and containing two urns, the one of grey and the other of black pottery. There was nothing in the urns but earth; in the coffin were five jet buttons, as finely polished as if they had been newly deposited. These were of different sizes, the largest more than an inch in diameter; they were concave on the one side and convex on the other, and they had knobs for attaching them. Obviously, a most interesting find. No doubt when this place of sepulchre was originally formed, the urns contained the ashes of the dead; otherwise, it is inconceivable that they should have been buried there in such a well-ordered environment. The urns had been broken at some period prior to their being unearthed, and the likelihood is that the ashes that they

originally contained had mingled with and been assimilated by the soil.

The parish of Kilbirnie also has given up its memorials of the old, unauthenticated days; its urns containing calcined bones and its stone coffin with human remains. The details are thus given in the Statistical Account: "Early in the century, three stone coffins, but without the addition of any mound over them, were discovered on the right bank of the Garnock, about a quarter of a mile below Kilbirnie Bridge; one of them contained a large urn filled with burnt bones; but in neither of the two, nor in one opened about the same time on the opposite bank of the river near to Nether Mill, and close to the base of a large barrow, or mound, were found any relics whatsoever. About thirty years ago, the late Mr. Cochran, in the course of his agricultural improvements, had occasion to remove a slightly elevated tumulus, situated on the lands of Ladyland, in the centre of which a small urn was found containing ashes. In 1836, a stone coffin, containing remains of human bones, was discovered on the farm of Langlands, about three-quarters of a mile north of Kilbirnie. The tumulus over it was by much the most remarkable object of the kind in this quarter. It stood on the level part of a field, skirted by

the Garnock on the west, from which it was fifty yards distant. It was of a circular form, 100 feet in diameter, and 6 feet in height. Originally, it had been much higher, but about the beginning of the century, a great quantity of stones were taken from its summit to form a road in the neighbourhood. What remained of it in 1836 was composed of stones of various dimensions, intermixed with earth. Few of these were heavier than a man could carry, excepting a row placed 7 feet within the line of the base, and some 3 or 4 feet apart, each of which might weigh half-a-ton. The coffin, or chest, which was formed of six flat stones, neatly fitted together, measured 2 feet 7 inches in length, 1 foot 9 inches in breadth, and 1 foot 7 inches in depth. It was situated in the centre of the tumulus, and its longitudinal position was north and south. It contained nothing but bones very much decayed, and the greater part of which lay in its south end. Many of these, on being handled and exposed to the air, crumbled into dust, but several of the fragments which have been preserved can be distinctly recognised as belonging to the human species. In the spring of 1837, every vestige of this primeval monument was removed." It were vain to speculate whose remains they were that were

thus disturbed, or by whom the primeval monument was made. The fact, however, that such care was shown in the honouring of the dead appears to demonstrate that the dust of their friends was precious in the sight of the early fathers; and no doubt in many parts of the shire there are still funeral urns and stone cists lying untouched in the very spots where they were reverentially placed by those who were the inhabitants of the land, in days that gave in their account ere yet the recording historian had come upon the scene.

In the year 1826, during a period of dull trade, and when it was necessary to find occupation for the unemployed, what were then known as the "Sandy Knowes" of Wallacetown were levelled by the weavers. They turned up what the recorder calls "a good many urns and other similar ancient relics," and the inference was drawn that the knowes "had been used as a burial-place, probably by some branch of the early Celtic or Cymbric race, who peopled this division of Scotland." This most interesting discovery has, so far, hardly received the consideration which its importance merited. The recorded history of Ayr is cut off short at the beginning of the thirteenth century, or with the end of the twelfth, and anything beyond that has had to be evolved by a process, always more or

less unreliable, of deduction. But here we have proof positive that, within what are now the bounds of the burgh, a community existed during the Celtic period; whether the earlier period, before the Roman invasion, or the later, after the Romans had taken their departure, we cannot say. The probability would seem to be, from what we know of the comparatively recent development of Wallacetown, that these early townsmen dwelt on the south side of the river, where the royal burgh of the thirteenth century had its seat, and that they conveyed the remains of their friends across the water to be burned among the sandy knowes, and their ashes laid to rest in these funeral urns in this place of quiet, where they might be undisturbed of the throng. We know that these were warlike times, and that the Celtic tribesmen had to fight hard for their footing with other Celts from the western Highlands and from Ireland; and probably many a stiff encounter was waged in the neighbourhood of Ayr. It were vain to speculate whether the graveyard among the knowes of Wallacetown may, or may not, have been a scene of battle; if it was, the object of the invaders was, in all likelihood, the primitive town, whose memory has all but perished; what is of real lasting interest and importance is the proof afforded by the discovery of the urns, of an Ayr

of, at latest, the eighth century, and probably two or three centuries older than even that. What became of the urns none can say now. They have long ago disappeared; and, in these circumstances, it is a pity that they were ever disturbed, or, at all events, that they were not restored to their place in the sands in that earliest of the known Ayr burying-grounds.

In the parishes of Stair and of Stewarton, interesting finds of the same character have been made. That of Stair was a cairn that, on being removed, was found to cover a grave cut out of the solid rock, on the lands of Trabboch Mains, while that of Stewarton consisted of three urns containing human bones, that were unearthed in a small plantation at Peacockbank. Loudoun Park, in the first half of last century, rendered up five stone coffins, the site of which was marked by the accustomed cairn. They contained what appeared to have been the dust of the bodies they originally enshrined, and a few cutting instruments made of stone. But probably the most notable, as it was one of the best carried out and most carefully recorded investigations, was that which was conducted into the contents of what was known as "King Coil's Tomb," to the south of Coilsfield House in Tarbolton parish. It was in May, 1837, that the mound was explored. Some 4 feet below the surface the

investigators came on a flat stone, of a circular form, about 3 feet in diameter. "Under the circular stone," says the writer of the Statistical Account of the parish, "was first a quantity of dry, yellow-coloured, sandy clay, then a small flagstone laid horizontally, covering the mouth of an urn filled with white-coloured, burnt bones. In removing the dry clay, by which this urn was surrounded, under flat stones several small heaps of bones were observed, not contained in urns, but carefully surrounded by the yellow-coloured clay mentioned above. The urns in shape resembled flower-pots; they are composed of clay, and have been hardened by fire. The principal urn is seven and seven-eighth inches in height, seven and seven-eighth inches in diameter, and five-eighths of an inch in thickness. It has nothing of ornament, except an edging or projecting part about half-an-inch from the top." Whether this mound had anything to do with our old mythical friend, King Coil, otherwise King Cole, or not, there is no need for discussing here. It would, of course, be most gratifying to think that, Pict or Briton, he had left his bones in Ayrshire; but probably the safest position to take in relation to this is to say that there is no satisfactory proof that he did not.

It will be seen from what we have said of these tumuli, that they have been found, at irregular

intervals, over the greater part of the county. The one reliable inference from this is that the shire was peopled over its whole extent at an early period of the Christian era, and very likely before the Christian era. We need not dogmatise concerning the individuality of these early progenitors of ours. As many of the place-names indicate, they were of Celtic race; from the fact that they showed regard for the remains of their dead, we may also infer that they loved them when they were alive; and, as human nature must have been the same in their days as in ours, we may conclude that in the main they lived their lives pretty much as we do ours. They dwelt in the shadow, but on the principle that civilisation is less an affair of art and science and invention than it is of the heart and of the life, it is permissible to make the further deduction that they were neither savage nor barbarous, and that in their own primitive way, they were as much concerned for the right as are their descendants.

That Ayrshire was well-peopled in these far-off days is evident from the fact that the Romans thought it worthy of their occupation. The Roman occupation of Scotland by Agricola began in the year 80 A.D. It never was complete, and it fluctuated in duration and extent even in the southern part of the country, but from the time

that the eagle-bearing legions crossed the Scottish border on their way north, to the time that they finally left it, recalled to defend the imperial city on the Tiber against the hordes of the northern barbarians, who were by that time overrunning the plains of southern Italy, was three and a half centuries. There is a good deal that is indistinct in the story of their occupation of Ayrshire; but enough either remains, or has remained until within a comparatively recent period, to satisfy the inquirer that here, as elsewhere, they made their influence felt, and that, no doubt, to the material advantage of the mass of the Celtic people, upon whose more primitive and less organised life they had broken in. The necessity of avoiding the hastening to rash conclusions regarding the presence of the Romans at particular spots was well illustrated about five-and-twenty years ago, when a skilled archæologist, Dr. Macdonald, then rector of Ayr Academy, was asked by the Ayrshire and Wigtownshire Archæological Association to report on the old "Roman Road" from Ayr to Dalmellington. From time immemorial it had been known as the Roman Road, but when trenches were cut across it, and its formation examined, the road was no more Roman, and the accepted belief up till then that Ayr had been a Roman station, perhaps even a Roman seaport, vanished. The

Statistical Account tells us of a Roman camp at Parkmoor, in the parish of Tarbolton, and there is a somewhat detailed description of a similar camp in Galston parish, "chosen and fortified with all the military science for which that celebrated people were distinguished," 80 yards long and 144 broad, with another enclosure upon a lower level towards the south. Here, in 1801, a silver coin, in good preservation, was found, bearing the inscription: "Cæsar Augustus, Divi E., Pater Patriae." Thus, in the opinion of the parish minister, the author of the Account, incontestable evidence is furnished that Galston parish had received at least one visit from the masters of the world. On the banks of the Aven, two miles further to the south, the remains of another military station, nearly surrounded by the river, and fortified where it was not so by rampant and ditch, help to hand down the memory of the Roman soldiery. The arch of a Roman water-gate is reported to have been uncovered in the Sandgate of Ayr early in last century; and the finding of the remains of Roman villas at Largs, recalls the days when wealthy Romans dwelt by the shores of the Clyde. In a drained part of Lindston Loch, in Dalrymple parish, a tripod of Roman bronze was found in the end of the eighteenth century, "and a pitcher of earthenware, like that

represented in prints in the hand of the woman of Samaria, at the well of Sychar," was found at Perclewan in 1833. Relics, supposed to have been Roman, were unearthed on the farms of Drumbeg and Drumshang, in Maybole parish. Close by Newfield, in Dundonald parish, a Roman bath was brought to light in a place "flooded with water, except during a very dry season"; and in Loudoun, on the farm of Braidlee, a few years prior to 1837, three vessels of Roman bronze, a large pot, a smaller pot, and a kettle, or rather jug, supported by three legs, were dug out of the moss.

Whatever may have been the extent of the Roman occupation in Ayrshire, it appears certain enough that the Romans were here, and it cannot have been otherwise than that they exerted no inconsiderable influence, not only on the life of the district while they were in it, but for long after they had gone; and we take it that, when the last camp had been struck, and the last soldier had marched away, the Celtic inhabitants, who resumed their sway over the country, profited not a little from the example that had been set them by the strangers from the Tiber-side.

Last of all, so far as these grey fathers of Ayrshire are concerned, we come to the lake-dwellers, the men of the crannogs. At first blush one is inclined to associate the crannog

with a condition of barbarism. We come to it as we roam the woodlands of Carrick, or the forests of Kyle. In the heart of the treeland there is a loch, and all around the undrained land is marshy and boggy. In the summer evening the mists are exhaling from the swamps; in the drear, damp, clinging November day it is wet underfoot, as it is overhead; in the dead of the hard winter the loch is a sheet of ice, and the swampy lands are crusted, hard, and rugged. But whatever be the weather, there in front of us rises the crannog. It stands in the water, on piles raised high above the water. It is large, it is round, it is the product of much ingenuity. And in the crannog there dwell men, women and children. It is their home, and the surest abiding-place that they know.

When the Roman soldiery had been withdrawn, Scotland again passed, as far as its government was concerned, into the hands of the Celts. No doubt many Roman colonists, who had elected to make these ends of the earth their home, remained behind, but no longer was the military force at hand to overawe when necessary the fierce tribesmen. Naturally, therefore, they took up the burden of government. The crannog, as it stands there in front of us, in the water and out of the water, is itself an education. There were many rivalries in the country, and these

were the days of the good old rule, the simple plan. Fights and feuds and forays were part of the predestined order of events, and the Celtic tribesmen, when they elected to dwell and make their home in a given part of the country, had perforce to look to self-protection. That was their first instinct. They had not the wealth, either in kind or in resource, for the erection of great stone and lime castles such as by-and-by were to stud and dot the soil of Ayrshire; but they had ingenuity, they had organisation, they knew the virtue of the stronghold against the day of evil, and against the day of battle and of war, and accordingly, when they found a suitable lake and suitable surroundings, they set to work in the construction of a crannog, or lake-dwelling. Living entirely on the fruits of the soil, or from the products of the chase, they had to make sure that the country immediately adjacent to the lake was sufficiently arable for the growth of their bere and their barley, that the forest was sufficiently prolific for the hunters, and that there was grass enough for their little black cattle and their long-tailed sheep. Satisfied on these points, they began their work, and the research that has been made at Lochlea and Lochspouts tells us after what manner they built, and how they lived amid the waters and the fens, and on the loch-sides.

It was no easy matter to build a crannog. First of all, the hewers had to go out into the forest and cut down trees so as to secure a double ring of piles for the lake-dwelling to stand upon. Their implements were crude. Some of them swung the stone axes that had been handed along to them from the days of the fathers; others had axes of iron. With patient labour and steady toil they overcame the forest trees, lopped them of their branches, cut the piles into the requisite lengths, and sharpened their points partly with the axe blades and partly with the action of fire; and then they carried them into the lake and placed them in position. The foundation of the crannog had two rings of timber, an outer and an inner, and the uprights were driven deep into the mud, and the 6 or 8 feet between the two circles filled with clay and stones and the lopped-off branches of the trees. The pile-driving cannot have been an easy task; but easy or not it was well done, and the result was a foundation that was good for a thousand years, and that at the end of that period was as fit to carry a crannog as it was when the Celtic builders paused in their labour and pronounced it well and workmanlike done. And it was upon this foundation that the lake-dwelling was built—a home, a fort, a common refuge and a rallying-point when the hostile

tribesmen came raiding through the forest glades.

It was the most natural thing in the world for the lake-dwellers to utilise the lake as a reception for a good deal of their refuse. When a lady of the crannog broke a plate she tossed it into the water. When the cook had no use for the horns of the sheep, or of the boar, or of the deer that she had been preparing for the crannog dinner, she threw them overboard. Broken tools, discarded ornaments, splintered weapons, all found a resting-place in the lake. There, where they had been thrown, they lay embedded in the mud, while one century after another passed on, while Scotland kept on developing in war, in culture, in learning, in the arts and sciences, and until the lake-dwellers had been all but, if not indeed wholly, forgotten. Then, when long generations of kings had lain down at rest and in quiet, the archæologists and the antiquarians came and found the crannog "middens," and recovered the long-forgotten rubbish, and enabled us to piece together the daily life that was lived by these forbears of ours. Up till the seventeeth century there was a great deal of ague in Ayrshire, because the land was so undrained; but what must it have been when the lochs had their houses towering erect above their waters, and when the people, from choice or from necessity,

lived on the edges of the swamps and the fens, and in the misty exhalations of the marshes? But that is in the realm of inference; it is not a deduction from the "middens" of Lochlea or Lochspouts. What these tell us is the familiar story of life. Between the crannog and the land there was a removable bridge, and when the enemy came, this bridge was withdrawn, and the lake-dwelling became an island fortress. It was equipped for war. The inhabitants had stone axes, they had long spears, they wielded implements of iron, they were skilled in the use of bows and arrows. Their fighting was done at close quarters. They looked upon the enemy, and he upon them; and when he tried to storm the crannog, they smote him as he stood in the water or tried to scale the foundation whereon the crannog stood. In the piping times of peace, the huntsmen roamed the forest in quest of food. In the fields adjacent to the loch, the husbandman sowed his crop, and reaped it also in the fulness of time: oats and bere and barley; and in the late autumn days, and in the winter, the women and the girls ground the gathered grain in the rude querns, or handmills, singing as they turned the upper upon the nether millstone. Each crannog had its canoes, dug-outs from the forest, formed and fashioned with much patient care and ingenuity, and in these they cleft the waters of

the loch, fishing in primitive fashion for the good of the community, enjoying themselves through the long summer days in coasting along the shores, perhaps even sweethearting and courting, after the fashion of the young men and the maidens of all time. There was taste on the crannog that even went the length of real Samnian ware. The women were as fond of ornaments, of rings and wristlets and anklets, as the women of these days of ours are of the tasteful—and other—jewellery of the twentieth century providers. They combed their long hair with bone combs cut with primitive saws; and the broken teeth of some of these combs are suggestive of what a task it must have been at times to overcome the "tugs" that had formed in the matted locks of the fair ones. They supped their kail and their porridge with horn spoons. If they lacked iron pots wherein to prepare the food, they had ingenuity enough to produce the same results by means that called for both patience and skill. The pots were of wood. Adjacent to where these stood the fire burned, and the cook conveyed from the fire to the pot a succession of red-hot stones, which she dropped into the dinner, or the breakfast, as the case might be, until, by-and-by, the food was ready for the table, or else for the floor, whereon more likely it stood, while the crannog folk squatted round it, and "helped

themselves," to the assuagement of their hunger.

Thus they lived their lives, these crannog-dwellers; and I wot they were not lives that were wholly free from pleasure or from excitement. Theirs was the same human nature that is ours. They had their years on earth a thousand or twelve hundred years before we have had ours, and they have had a thousand or twelve hundred years' start of us in the land of spirits. On the whole, therefore, they may have had the best of it; and if we cannot envy them as they gathered round their rushlights, and at the fireside on the cold, dark nights of winter, we can, at all events, appreciate the struggle that they made in their day and generation for themselves, for one another, for the country, and the heritage of independence and of self-reliance that they have passed on to us.

OLD-TIME LAWYERS OF THE COUNTY TOWN

As it was many long years ago, so it is now, and so there is every appearance of its continuing to be, Ayr is very fertile in the number of its lawyers. "Lawyers" is their generic name; within the easy memory of middle life they were specifically writers, but for reasons which were no doubt quite satisfactory to themselves, they assumed the style and title of solicitors. But a rose with any other name would smell as sweet, and a lawyer is a lawyer all the world over.

At the opening of the twentieth century Ayr has well over half an hundred gentlemen of the long robe. In fifty men there are fifty minds; but there is one thing towards which all these minds coalesce, and that is that, for the size of the place and for the legal business that is to be done in it, there are at least two lawyers where there ought to be one. According to the older members of the Bar, there is not one-half the business done in the Courts that there used to be. People do not go to law as aforetime they did in the development of Ayrshire's share

of the human race. If they have occasion to quarrel, they think more seriously than they did, before they rush to consult their man of business, and they do not seem to have the time that they had of old to kick their heels in the vicinity of the County Buildings. I do not know that the later Christianity is of a less bellicose type than the earlier—the march of Christianity has never been across the fields and the meadows of peace—but from one cause or another, there would appear to be in legal matters a greater tendency than there was formerly to agree with the adversary quickly, while as yet the parties are in the way together. The litigant, for the sake of litigation, has all but, if not altogether, disappeared.

I remember two brothers of this sort, born pursuers or defenders, as the case might be, who lived in the district of which Ayr is the legal centre. Like some Ayrshire feudalists of the sixteenth century, when they had no common enemy upon whom to exhaust their superfluous energies, they turned their batteries upon one another. And not once nor twice did they thus engage the time and ruffle the temper of the Sheriff-Substitute by the ingenious persistency of their litigiousness. Once, however, for a whole year they had been at peace, and when Hogmanay night came round, they sat together

over their toddy, and exchanged congratulations in that they had attained to an unwonted altitude of brotherly love.

"Only to think," said Jock, "that it's mair than a year since we were up at Ayr seein' the Shirra!"

"Man, man!" observed Tam, "but it's wunnerfu'."

"Fac'!" replied Jock; "an' yet it wasna that I hadna a chance at ye. Ye ken fine that I had a guid case against ye ower the march dyke."

"Toots, man!" Tam answered; "ye're haverin. Ye ken as weel as I dae that ye hadna a leg to stan' on there."

"Fegs, we'll verra sune see whether or no!" Jock said, thumping the table, and the cold, grey, hard light of an action-at-law glinting in his eye. "I'll teach ye to speak like that to me, sir."

And from one thing to another, the quarrel went on, until, with the opening of the year, the lawyers were at work, and the Sheriff-Substitute was once more cursing the natal day of the litigious brothers.

There are no doubt "characters" in the profession, at least in the process of evolution. Rightly enough, a man is not recognised as a "character" by his contemporaries until he is dead. By "character" I do not mean a *lusus naturæ*, far less a mental weakling; but rather

a man of individuality, who stands out among his fellows distinctively and notably, and in such a way as to stamp him with a certain measure of originality. Even in law, strange as it may seem, there are simpletons. There was Mr. M'Jamsey, for instance. He sent his clerk to a newspaper man of my acquaintance:

"Mr. M'Jamsey's compliments, and would Mr. Burgeois say how to spell 'pees-weep'?"

"What, in the name of Heaven," asked Mr. Burgeois, "does Mr. M'Jamsey mean by sending such a message?"

"It is this, sir. He asked me how to spell 'pees-weep,' and I said it was p-e-e-s - w-e-e-p, and then he told me I must be wrong, because the pees-weep was called pees-weep because it ate peas."

The first time Mr. M'Jamsey was called into Court it was to appear in a case that his father had in hand. In the absence of his father, he was sent for by the Sheriff, and he appeared in a great state of tremor and excitement.

"My lord," he explained, "papa has gone from home, but mamma expects him back on Tuesday."

The Sheriff leaned back in his chair and smiled compassionately. "In that case," he observed, "we'll wait till your pa comes home. The case is adjourned till next Wednesday."

There was a lawyer who lived in Ayr a few years ago, who was the last of a school that had been trained in the offices of three or four writers well known in their day, and noted as great and proficient profane swearers. Profane swearing was their custom, and their friends charitably excused them on the ground that "they couldna help it." However that may be, their capacity to curse was practically unlimited, and they swore with an originality that might more profitably have been turned to better account. In later life one of these became, in his own fashion, highly religious, and it was but very occasionally that he lapsed, and that with deep sorrow later on, from the pathway of pure words and ungarnished vocabulary. He was always on the watch against his weakness, and in serious temptations he was almost invariably a conqueror, but the simple things and annoyances of his daily life occasionally wrought his undoing.

For instance, he came into the office one day where the clerks were at work, and began to read over a deed that was being copied by a boy called James. "Very good, James," he said; "very good indeed—highly creditable, in fact—but James—you will observe that you have made a small blot up there—yes, James, a blot!—great Heavens, James!—are you aware, sir, that you have made a blot where no blot should be?

—— it, James, d ye see the —— thing?—so help me —— James!— a —— blot! and may the ——!" and so on, until sheer exhaustion and a growing sense of the incapacity of the Anglo-Saxon tongue to rise to the heights of a great occasion compelled him to retreat to his own room, there to collapse in prostration and grief that once again he had fallen from his high estate.

It would never do, of course, for a lawyer to look ignorant in face of a client. There was Mr. Macderment, gone these years to be with his ancestors, and he had a partner. This partner was conducting a case on behalf of the firm, that had originated in Carrick. The partner was from home, and the litigant had perforce to interview Mr. Macderment. A gentleman, who was present at the interview, described what happened. Let it be given in dialogue. The scene is Mr. Macderment's chamber. Enter the litigant:

Mr. Macderment — Good morning, Mister ——? Good morning, Mister ——? You are Mister ——?

Litigant—Mr. Killochan.

Mr. Macderment—Exactly. Just so, Mr. Killochan. Good morning, Mr. Killochan! You have come—you have come, I say, to see me, from—from—you have come to see me from —?

Litigant—Maybole.

Mr. Macderment—Exactly; Maybole—I was right. Mr. Killochan from Maybole. And how are you all this morning? Quite well, I hope? Yes—and you have come to see me about—?

Litigant—The case.

Mr. Macderment—The case? Yes, of course, the case. And where are we now, Mr. Killochan?

Litigant—Well, he'll no take the seventy-five pounds.

Mr. Macderment—He'll not take the seventy-five pounds! Well, well! Not take it, did you say? He must be an infernal ass to refuse the seventy-five pounds. But what are we to do?

Litigant—That's what I want to ken.

Mr. Macderment—Yes, of course; that's what you want to know. Naturally, Mr. Killochan. Let me see! I'll tell you what you'll do. This'll have to be it— Yes—just so—exactly, exactly. You'll write to him, d'ye see, saying that—that—yes, that you've seen me—me, you understand — and that you'll write again on Tuesday.

Litigant—But Tuesday's the last day, and if I don't pay by twelve o'clock he'll put the diligence in force against me.

Mr. Macderment—By the Lord Harry, but that's a bad job! But stay—I'll tell you what to

do. The agent on the other side is Mr. ——? If I remember rightly it is Mr. ——?

Litigant—Mr. M'Growther.

Mr. Macderment—So—exactly—I thought as much. Then you'll leave this to me, and I'll see him myself. You go away home—see!—to Maybole—I'll see this all right. Good morning, Mr. Killochan—good morning—it's been a nice shower.

Exit the litigant, leaving Mr. Macderment perspiring freely, and entering in his day book —"To consultation with Mr. Killochan, 6s. 8d."

No man in this life, not even a lawyer, is free from trouble and care. A number of years ago there was an action being conducted from Ayr on behalf of a railway company concerning the demurrage of some waggons, or of many waggons, at Hurlford, and the night before the case was to be called in the Court of Session an Ayr lawyer accompanied a high official of the railway to Edinburgh to interview the advocate, a distinguished lawyer and a Queen's Counsel, who on the morrow was to champion the cause of the company. They arrived in Edinburgh in the evening, and at once proceeded to the house of the Q.C., whom they found at home. He had completed a hard day's work, and had just dined; and having likewise wined, he was, to say the least of it, in a highly mellow condition. He

bade them sit down, smiled benignantly on them, and ordered in tumblers and cigars. He shook them cordially by the hand. He requested them to make themselves quite at home; then he sleepily invited them to make known to him the purport of their visit.

That was exactly what they were there for, and they proceeded forthwith to be as lucid and as interesting as possible, but all their efforts to lighten the darkness or to keep the Q.C. awake were in vain; and the railway official was so seriously alarmed over the possible consequences to the company, that he could not refrain from showing it in his demeanour and then in his language. In a waking interval, the Q.C. noticed it, and rising, he slapped the railwayman familiarly on the back. "It's all right," he hiccupped; "you trust in me, and I'll see you through; and begad—I'll tell you what it is—we'll knock this fellow Hurlford into a cocked hat — see if I don't." Notwithstanding this assurance, the railwayman would fain have sought other counsel, but the "junior," the Edinburgh agent, and the Ayr lawyer would not hear of such a thing. Early the next day they had a second interview with the Q.C. He picked up all the points at sight, grasped his case as if by intuition, and so conducted himself in Court that the verdict came down on what

was, for the railway company, the right side. The moral whereof is — but perhaps, on the whole, it may be as well to leave the moral alone.

In these latter and conventional days, the Sheriff, or the Sheriff-Substitute—for it is all the same, so far as that goes—is popularly supposed to be a man with a good deal of dignity about him; but in the first half of last century he still retained the prerogative of being original, and even of taking his originality with him to the bench. The Sheriff-Substitute at Ayr, Mr. Aiton, had been before his elevation a highly-respected local pleader. He instituted a custom of weekly holidays, which, on the summer Saturdays, he took with the members of the Bar on the Carrick shore or in the country. On these occasions the wine of the country flowed very freely, but it so happened one special Saturday that "the Faculty" had gone a-holidaying without a sufficiency of the blessed fluid. What was to be done? The "Shirra" rose to the occasion. Calling the two youngest members of the Bar, he bade them go to an adjoining farm.

"Present my compliments," he said—"the Shirra's compliments—and say that I would be very much obliged to them if they could let us have a bottle or two of whisky."

Off went the messengers on their quest, but

they had not gone far in the direction of the farm-house ere they bethought themselves that the errand on which they had been sent was hardly up to the mark. They accordingly retired to a little glen, or a wooded hollow, where they sat down, lighted their pipes, and concocted a story to retail to the Sheriff. A decent interval having thus elapsed, they returned to where the rest of the party were waiting impatiently on the whisky.

"Where's the whisky?" demanded the Shirra.

"We've got none," was the answer.

"What!" cried the Shirra, half-incredulous, altogether wroth. "What! No whisky?"

"None. They wouldn't give us any."

"Good Heavens! They wouldn't give you any? Did you give them my compliments—the Shirra's compliments?"

"Yes."

"And what did they say?"

"They said: 'The Shirra be damned!'"

"The Shirra be damned!" roared the exasperated Sheriff. "Jist wait till I catch the low deevils in the Sma' Debt Coort."

In those days there were two vessels, the *Gog* and the *Magog*, that traded from Ayr—sometimes to North America, sometimes to the West Indies—in the timber trade. Then, as now, tobacco was supplied straight from bond to ships duty-free, the official understanding being that the boxes

containing the honey-dew should not be opened until the ship had put to sea. Thus the sailors were supplied, at a cost of about one shilling and sixpence a pound, with a tobacco that they could not have bought on shore at less than four times that amount; and it was quite a customary thing for the skippers to take on board a box or two more than they required, and to stow the same away for their own behoof, and in the interest of their friends ashore, in such a way that the Excise officers should not, on their return to Ayr, be able to discover it. There were very few people who thought it any offence to cheat the Customs, and men in the very best positions waited in high expectancy on the return of the timber ships from foreign parts, in order to annex at prime cost as much of the honey-dew as they could get hold of.

The Shirra was one of those who thus hankered after the unclean thing, and it was a generally understood thing in the town that no time was to be lost in letting him know when the *Gog* or the *Magog* came into the bay. If the Court was sitting at the time, so much the worse for the Court; and it is on record that more than once, when the Sheriff was deep in the mysteries of some interesting case, the door of the Court-house was suddenly and unceremoniously thrown open, and a voice shouted:

"The *Gog's* (or the *Magog's*) in the bay."

With the result that the Sheriff started to his feet, cried :

"The Court's adjourned," and forthwith rushed off to share in the spoil.

A well-known townsman, and a personal friend of the Sheriff, was hailed to the bar of the Sheriff Court, charged with having committed a serious assault upon an Irishman. The Shirra took the case in his own chamber, and, when the charge had been read over, he asked the accused what he had to say to it.

"My lord," explained the well-known townsman, "you know me well. You know that I am a law-abiding citizen, and that I would be the last man upon earth to do anything that might even seem to be an offence against the law. This man, who has in the most gratuitous way lodged information against me, is an Irishman—an Irishman, your lordship will bear in mind ; and I assure you that there is not one single word of truth in the charge. It is, on the contrary, my lord, a base fabrication from beginning to end."

"An Irishman!" the Shirra muttered softly. Then raising his voice, and without permitting the case to go to trial at all, he announced that he found the accused not guilty, and soundly rated the native of the Green Isle into the bargain.

The same Sheriff had a strong dislike to litigious persons, and it is said that he used to check their tendency to rush unduly into Court by forcibly expressed threats to nonsuit them if ever they had the audacity to come back again.

It is notorious that there is such a thing as wresting the Scriptures from their proper uses and purposes. An illustration of the bad practice was offered by a lawyer who one day put a witness in the box to swear, in a criminal case, what was only too palpably not true. At the close of the trial a fellow-solicitor, of tenderer conscience and more regard for the truth, reproached him for what he had done. "Have you forgotten," he asked him, "what the Ninth Commandment says—'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour'?" "By no means," was the ready though unprincipled answer; "but the Commandment doesn't say—'Thou shalt not bear false witness in favour of thy neighbour.'"

It is interesting to note how extremely ignorant a man may be even of what is his own life-work. There was a clerk in the County Buildings. Law was his profession: his business, at all events, was to transcribe legal deeds and perform the other functions common to the vocation of a law clerk. This young man had one or two rather expensive, not to say extravagant, tastes. One of them was a love for smoking cigars, and he had

succeeded in getting on credit from a chemist and druggist in Ayr a box or two of a commendable brand of Havanas. Time after time the chemist tried to get his money, but in vain ; and ultimately he had recourse to the Small Debt Court, and had a summons served on the clerkly smoker. It is the custom at the opening of the Court to "cry over" the names of the various pursuers and defenders, and these, if they are present, answer "Here." If the pursuer is present and the defender absent, the Clerk of Court says "Absent—decrit," and judgment is given accordingly for the sum sued for ; if, on the other hand, it is the pursuer who is absent and the defender who is present, the case is dismissed. This clerk made it a weekly habit to stand at the back of the Court and to listen to the roll being called ; and when his own name was mentioned, he smiled and said nothing. The usual "Absent—decrit" was said, and the clerk went off quite happy. Shortly after, he met the pursuer on the street, and that gentleman accosted him. "Well," he said, "when are you going to pay for the cigars?" "Pay for the cigars!" was the reply. "You've got your decrit—what more do you want?"

There was a simple soul of a clerk in an office in Wellington Square. He was a near relative of a Scotsman distinguished in the Ten

Years' Conflict, but his were the paths of routine, his the ways of peace. He was harmless, civil-spoken, inoffensive. But every now and then he would break forth into originality. Thus, for example, on one occasion when he was sent by his governor for a ten-shilling stamp to the office of Stamps and Taxes, instead of spending the half-sovereign according to instructions, he invested it in an enormous string of sausages which the thoughtful butcher hung round about his neck. To say that the lawyer was highly irate when the clerk appeared thus bedecked, is to put it very mildly; at the same time, some folks went the length of hinting that there was a certain method in the clerk's madness, and that the episode of the sausages was a gentle reminder that pay-day had come and gone, and that the pay itself had not yet been forthcoming. The same innocent was entrusted with the writing out of a deed that began: "Know all men by these presents;" but in place of using the words approven of the formula, he wrote: "Know one woman by these presents." The governor was furious.

"What do you mean by this?" he cried. "Know one woman by these presents! What does it mean?"

"What's wrang wi't?" asked the simple clerk.

"What's wrong with it! Everything's wrong

with it. What I bid you write was: 'Know all men by these presents.'"

"Weel, it's a' the same. If ye tell ae woman ye may be quite shair that she'll tell a' the men."

Not all the lawyers of Ayr were as careful and accurate as they should have been. There was one, however, in high repute as an auditor and practical accountant. It was his rule to let nothing pass that was not rigidly and accurately unchallengeable. One evening he was expounding the duty of financial thoroughness; and specifically he laid it down that in an audit involving thousands of pounds, if there was one single halfpenny at fault, it was the accountant's duty to ascertain where the mistake lay, even if the investigation should cost him a week's steady labour.

"There's a better way than that," grunted a lawyer of the rougher and readier sort.

"A better way! Impossible! Nothing could be better than absolute accuracy."

"Oh, aye, but there is, though. I hae a better way mysel'."

"And that is?"

"The wee penknife. Ye see? Scrape—scrape—and the thing's done."

Whereat the desiderater of accuracy broke forth in wrath and in hot indignation.

Forty years ago many of the lawyers' clerks in

Ayr were unquenchably thirsty; so much so that it was the custom in some of the offices to send the youngest boy to the Fort Brewery for a can of ale. One day a clerk, his master being out, had the can between his feet and was ladling out the ale, when a gentleman called and asked if Mr. M'Master was in. "Yes," was the answer; "here he's," and the ribald clerk pointed to the contents of the ale-can as he spoke.

THE DEIL AND HIS BAIRNS IN AYRSHIRE

For all practical purposes the Deil, as he was understood of the fathers and mothers, is dead. I do not mean the Devil—he is as much alive as ever he was, and still as of yore he goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; the person, or the personality, I refer to is the much variegated Deil, who did everything from live in the profoundest depths of the nether spheres, amid the roaring of sulphurous flames, and take his principal pleasure from the torturing of lost souls upon severely physical lines, to playing hide-and-seek in a kailyard with the lasses on a Hallowe'en night. There were many respects in which the Deil was not, after all, a bad soul. He had his disagreeable traits, no doubt. It did not say much for his taste, for example, that he could be persuaded to sit in a winnock bunker and screw his pipes the while a pack of ringwoodie hags, ugly enough to spean a foal, kept louping and jumping on a crummock; and it was very little indeed to his credit that he carried men and women off to his infernal den,

there to torment them through unending ages; but it must be admitted that he was very easily pleased indeed when he could extract any pleasure whatever from the society of such a very monotonous class of persons as the Scottish witches—taking them as a whole—undoubtedly were, and it has to be remembered that, in all probability, it was not a matter of choice with him that he had to convey the transgressors to his dark abode. And, even when he was thus conveying them, he did not always or entirely forego his sense of humour. Is it not on record that one day, when he was flying over Beith with two or three victims, one of them fast held between his teeth, and when he was asked by an auld wife whether he would not come back for her, he replied: "Imphm." That at least demonstrated originality, and willingness to oblige, even in very difficult circumstances. Besides, it was funny, after its kind.

But there were really quite a number of most unobjectionable features in the character of the Deil, as he was known to the fathers and mothers, and specially to the auld wives, in this part of the country. Could anything savour more of downright innocence than his putting in a pleasant hour or two playing on the seashore? That he did so cannot for a moment be doubted by those who are prepared to accept the testimony of the

ancients. A few miles south of Girvan one day the minister of Colmonell chanced to be walking about in gown and bands, and with the Holy Bible open in his hands. Looking down on the seashore from the top of a high cliff, judge of his surprise to see the Deil busy setting-up "stacks," or rocks, on end by the margin of the sea. A little boy would have played with stones, a little girl would have built a castle on the sand and decked it with shells; the Deil amused himself with rocks. That was all the difference. As thus he played, he chanced to look up, and you can fancy what a great surprise he got when he saw the minister of Colmonell in gown and bands, and carrying his Bible open, before him, looking at him over the rocks. I am sure if you and I were to see the minister of Colmonell so attired and watching us, and with a great Book in his hands — for these were not the days of pocket editions, and this minister of Colmonell must have been a very strong man—we too would be very much amazed. We might not, however, do exactly what the Deil did, for he flew right through the rocks, he was in such a hurry to get away without ever stopping to think; and the hole that he made is there to this day. It is the proof that he did it. And when one looks through it, it is no more possible to doubt the

truth of the story than it is to doubt that the Deil played the bagpipes in Kirk Alloway, when he sees the veritable winnock bunker in which he sat. How wonderful is the law of evidence!

Then, a few hundred yards south-west of Greenan Castle there is the Deil's dyke. It is not very clear why he tried to build this dyke, or why he stopped short before it was finished. If he had only gone on with it, we should have been able to walk to the Mull of Kintyre, which would have saved a good deal of sea-sickness to those who have to go to Campbeltown. The presumption of his stopping the work is that he grew a-weary of it, but is that not a tribute to the generous analogy that there is about him to the human nature that infuses itself in all the children of Adam?

It might, perhaps, be too much to say that the Deil was the projector of the kailyard school of literature, but this much is beyond any reasonable doubt, that he was a great frequenter of the kailyard before ever the kailyard school of literature was thought of. It was a great pleasure of his to get into a bourtree bush, and moan and groan and scare the girls. That was very like a man. And if the bourtree bush was on the edge of a kailyard, and the night happened to be Hallowe'en, and there was a "party" in the house, and the girls came out in their innocence

to pull the kail-stocks, he quite excelled himself in jubilation. Then, when they went into darksome rooms with nothing but a farthing candle in their hand, and looked into the looking-glass to see if they could see their sweethearts, he used sometimes to keek over their shoulders and scare them till they screamed and shrieked, and even dropped the candle ; whereat he fled off into the gloom and into the storm outside, and hurried to the next parish to do the same thing to another girl there. And there were special occasions on which he even became abnormally humorous. One well-known instance of this was when he came fiddling through the town and danced away with the exciseman. In presence of such a manifestation of a highly developed jocularity, the old wives came to the doors of their houses and addressed him as "Auld Cahoun." I put it to the ordinary reader whether there could be anything very dreadful in a Thing that came up the street fiddling and dancing with an exciseman, and permitting the old wives to shout "Auld Cahoun" at him ; neither, I take it, is it possible to conceive of much demoniacal ferocity being mixed up in a Nickie Ben, or in a Sootie, or in a Clootie, or in a Hornie, or even in an Auld Nick. No ; obviously the Deil was quite a different personage from the Devil ; and, more than that, he had beyond any doubt a number of

very interesting and remarkable traits in his character, as we shall see in a little when we come to closer quarters with him—I speak in a literary sense—and note how he conducted himself when he came into contact with certain persons and events that were, and that transpired, in this part of the country. We shall find that he was no Little Scotsman, but quite a patriot; that he was no narrow-minded sectarian, but catholic enough to side either with Papist or Protestant, as the circumstances of the day and hour seemed to him to require; and that while he could on proper occasion be both vindictive and awesome, he could also play the part of a social reformer, and bend his energies to the moral rehabilitation of a gluttonous man and a drunkard.

If there was one thing the Deil was good at, it was raising the wind. When an auld wife became a witch, one of the special powers with which he endowed her was to brew storms. He did this by Maggie Osborne, the well-known witch of Ayr. Maggie was one of the Deil's bairns, and we shall return to her again, but meanwhile, to illustrate this particular trait in the Deil's character, we annex, from the pages of Joseph Train, the antiquary, the story of how, with her master's aid, she sank the ship in the Bay of Ayr. She wanted to drown a sailor

against whose family she had a special grudge, and, learning the date of his intending return, she set herself to the encompassing of his destruction. Maggie was the mistress of an ale-house, and she brewed her own beer. She repaired to a garret above the shop. But before doing so, "she desired her servant girl to put some water in the mash-tun, and set an ale-cup to sail in it, and then place herself at the foot of the garret stair to wait the commands of her mistress. The maid having fulfilled these orders, took her station at the place appointed by Maggie, where she remained a considerable time, until she was desired to go down to the brew-house, and see in what part of the tun the cup was sailing, and if there were any ripples on the surface of the water. The girl did so, and returned saying the bicker was in the centre of the tun, rocking with the ripples on the water. 'That will do,' said Maggie; 'but in a few minutes you must return to the brew-house and bring the particulars as before.' The young woman again, according to the directions of her mistress, went to the brew-house, where she found the water rising in waves over the lip of the tun, and the bicker dashing from the one side to the other with the rapidity of lightning She informed Maggie of this, and that she also heard like the cries of people drowning. 'They

will cry long ere I pity them,' replied the witch; 'but go again.' The girl went, and found the water unagitated, and the bicker nowhere to be seen. Maggie, on being informed of this, came from her garret, and, with a grim smile, said: 'The Devil has served me weel for ance.'" And sure enough, the tale proceeds to tell, the ship had gone down in the bay, and all hands were at the bottom of the sea. This was the Deil at his worst; the Prince of the Powers of the air without a redeeming feature about him.

Quite otherwise was it with him when he gave a wind to Elcine de Aggart, the witch of Carrick.

Who Elcine de Aggart, the witch, was, save and except that she was the witch of Carrick, and where she obtained her most Norman-like name, are matters on which I do not feel warranted in being at all specific. She dwelt in Carrick, and within easy hail of the Castle of Dunure, the original home of the great Kennedy sept, or clan, or family. Train, the antiquary, wrote a ballad about her, in which he told the tale of how she acted in a considerable emergency; and as the ballad is a fair sample of the class of poetry to which it belongs, and the story it helps to immortalise is itself interesting, I make no apology for reproducing it:

"Why gallops the palfrey with Lady Dunure?
Who takes away Turnberry's kine from the shore?
Go, tell it in Carrick, and tell it in Kyle,
Although the proud Dons are now passing the Moil;
On this magic clue
That in fairyland grew,
Old Elcine de Aggart has taken in hand
To wind up their lives ere they win to our strand.

That Heaven may favour this grand armament
Against us poor heretic islanders sent;
From altars a thousand, though frankincense fly,
Though ten thousand chapel bells peal in the sky;
By this mystical clue,
Made when elf-land was new,
Old Elcine de Aggart will all countermand,
And wind up their lives ere they come to our strand.

They bring with them nobles, our castles to fill;
They bring with them ploughshares, our manors to till;
They likewise bring fetters, our barons to bind,
Or any whom they may refractory find;
But this magical clue
Of the indigo blue,
Which few, like De Aggart, could e'er understand,
Will baffle their hopes ere they win to our strand.

Was ever the sprite of the wind seen to lour
So dark o'er the Clyde as in this fatal hour?
Rejoice everyone may to see the waves now,
Each ship passing o'er from the poop to the prow;
With this mystical clue,
Made when elf-land was new,
Who will not give praise in their own native land
To Elcine de Aggart for guarding the strand?

Come back to your palfrey, my Lady Dunure;
Go, bring back old Turnberry's kine to the shore;

And tell it you may, o'er Carrick and Kyle,
The last ship has sunk by our good Lady's Isle.
And with such a clue
Of the indigo blue
Old Elcine de Aggart has at her command,
A foreign foe never shall come to our strand."

In these days, so far as I know, there were no recognised rules of warfare, and it is therefore to be assumed that Elcine de Aggart was doing a perfectly justifiable thing when she unwound the mystic clue to the undoing of the Dons, and that the Deil, who gave her the wind wherewith to drive them to destruction, was behaving in a very pro-British and patriotic manner. That was one of the advantages of having a specifically national Deil. If he had been a Cosmopolitan, he might not have cared two straws whether Scot or Spaniard won; but being essentially tribal, or, at the very most, national, he naturally had no mind to let his friends suffer at the hands of these foreigners. And, as the ballad says, down to the bottom went the war-ships freighted with Spanish hidalgoes and priests, and with all the unholy terrors of the Inquisition.

Here we take leave of Elcine de Aggart, and concentrate our attention on the unfortunate vessel that went to the bottom in close proximity to the Lady Isle. That vessel, according to the story, was the flag-ship of the Rear-Admiral,

Alcarede, and she was freighted with great store of wealth, culminating in a golden throne that had been intended to be placed in Wesminster Hall for the accommodation of the papal Nuncio, who was to be the Pope's deputy in lording it over the bodies and souls of the people of Great Britain. Now, it seemed very unfortunate to the good Protestant lairds and gentry of Ayrshire that so much good gold and so many precious jewels should be lying there all so uselessly at the bottom of the deep green sea, and so they inaugurated what, in these latter days, would be call a Combine, with the praiseworthy object of employing divers to descend into the depths and recover the goodly treasure. The Company having been duly floated, they sent to Holland and brought across two daring divers, and these were in nowise averse, for a consideration, to undertake the duty of recovering some of its wealth from the devouring main.

The first of the two divers to descend found the ship sure enough, and landed—if it be permissible to use that word—on her decks. It was a strange sight that met his gaze. The dead were lying clustered all around, and great was the finery in gold and in jewellery that their corpses wore. The Dutchman had no qualms of conscience particularly, and, apparently, no fine feelings, and he went on wrenching the gold chains, and the bespangled crucifixes, and the

diamond-hilted daggers, from their dead owners; and so, pilfering and wrenching, he worked his way from forward aft to where the great cabin rose from the main-deck. Here he encountered a new experience. Round the cabin door there were many wee imps that "fuffed," and that "puffed," and that "gurred," and that made things generally so hot — excuse the word again—for him, that he was fain to signal to be drawn up to the surface. He told what he had seen. The good Protestant Combine were in no wise daunted. In their eyes the Pope and the Devil—not the Deil—were as one, and, with the gold and jewels that had already been recovered to the unlimited liability concern in their hands, they religiously insisted on the second diver descending into the depths and daring the fiends below. But this diver was wise in his day and generation, and he came to terms with these pious Scots. For a grant of Crown land in Carrick he covenanted to undertake the enterprise; and, the land having been duly assigned to him and to his heirs for ever, he was lowered to the place of green water and yellowish-green seaweed and silent fishes, silent priests and warriors also, little devils, and he knew not what else. This particular Dutchman had a great reputation—he feared not man, neither regarded devil; and so, when the

wee imps came buzzing around, spitting at him, and waggling their forked tongues at him, he cared for none of those things. Apparently these evil spirits could not touch him ; and so he came right into the state-room, the great main cabin or hall of the battleship. There, in the reflected light, luminous, bright, clear, standing out in a radiance of its own, was the golden throne, and in it sat a benevolent-looking old gentleman, who rose as he entered and offered him his hand. This was the Deil. And the proof of it is this, that when the diver was about to take the hand, he discovered that it wasn't a hand at all, but a cloven hoof; and by that process of intuition that has been so useful to mankind generally, he realised that if he were to shake hands with the old gentleman, it would be all up with him. Whereat, bold man and all as he was, he turned his back on the Deil, on the golden throne, and on the fabulous wealth of the Spanish war vessel, hurried up to the surface, and ended the story.

Thus, patriotic to begin with, the Deil played the part of the Protestant against the Papist until the Spanish warships were at rest and in quiet in the caves of Neptune ; then, to protect the Popish treasure against the rapacity of the Protestant Combine, he sent that array of imps to withstand the Protestant enterprise,

and finally came in person to seat himself in the Papal chair of State.

In the case of the Cunningham drunkard and glutton, vouched for in the monkish "Chronicles of Lanercost," he acted as became a social reformer. This drunkard and glutton was called William—the Chronicles do not condescend on his other name — he had wealth more than sufficient for his daily needs, and, like the prodigal of old, he spent both his time and his money in riotous living. He ate much too much, and he drank in proportion; and altogether he was making a very sorry and a very abject business of his life. One day he was sitting in a room in a change-house, waiting on his friends to come and resume the saturnalia, when there entered a strange little fellow, shaped like an under-sized, deformed man, bearing what the recorder calls a "vessel"; which vessel appears to have been a pail with a lid on it. William was scared, and the impish dwarf grinned at him and chattered, and made him feel worse. Nevertheless, they fell a-talking, and William asked him what it was that he had in his vessel. The dwarf was most unwilling to say, but at last he took the lid off his pail. William grasped his nose, for of all smells, human and profane, that had ever assailed his olfactory nerves, this was out of sight the worst; worse even than

passing a cook shop, whence the steam and vapour and overpowering smells arising from a sumptuous dinner are issuing forth, immediately after you have risen from your own dinner, and do not mind a bit whether you ever see food again. The air reeked. But William, with all his gluttony and heavy drinking, was still a man of mettle, and he crossed the room and looked into the vessel. The less enlarging there is on the character of its contents the better. William asked what they were, and the grinning imp informed him that they were a sample batch of the contents and condition of his own stomach, and of the stomachs of his friends, when they were making beasts of themselves with liquor and meat. The revelation was too much for William, he staggered and sank back, and when he quite recovered consciousness, all that was left was the remains of the smell. Imp and vessel, they had vanished and gone.

And the pious chronicler wrote it all down for our edification in a book, and in the Latin tongue, and there it remains to this day. We know, on the authority of the monk, that it was an imp that thus appeared to William; and as imps have little or no initiative of their own, it is only fair to give the Deil all the credit that is going. From that day onward William was a reformed man. He eschewed gluttony,

he eschewed intoxication, and he lived to be a credit to the neighbourhood and a tribute to what the Deil could do as a social reformer when he took it into his head.

I never can approach the story of Sir Archibald, the Wicked, and how the Deil carried him off neck and crop in a fiery chariot, without recalling the terrors that this incident in Ayrshire superstition used to awake within me. To my mind, it was for long an "owre true tale." I sat by the fireside opposite a chubby-faced domestic from the country parts who was a thorough and a sincere believer in all ghost lore. She had a soft voice that lent itself to the literature of the nether spheres, and she went on and on and on, with all the never-ending cadence of Tennyson's brook. Her stories made the nights hideous, for, when I was wafted away to the land of Nod, I could see the wicked Sir Archibald dying, I could see that jet-black crow swooping on slow, fateful pinion through the gathered storm, and I could see the chariot of fire, with its agonised passenger, being driven, with deils many as a bodyguard, along the surface of the deep. I knew it all was a just judgment on the wretched Sir Archibald, he was such a wicked persecutor, and I knew that, as I was a good Protestant, and would rather be shut up on the Bass Rock for six months than connive in the

very smallest degree at the faintest and most shadowy semblance of black Prelacy, there was not the slightest danger that the Deil would ever play such hideous pranks on me; but none the less, I had a latent fear lest, by some terrible mischance, he might even come my way, and look at me with the eyes that went through and through you.

Sir Archibald had a sorry time of it when it came to dying. He was smitten of a hot fever, and he lay in a room in Culzean that overlooked the sea, and writhed in the physical agonies of the hottest corner of the pit of woe. To cool him they plumped him into ice-cold water, and ere long the steam was rising from it; and, of course, his immortal part was handed over to the Deil directly it had left its tabernacle. But he had been a man of consequence in the westland, and he had to have a brave funeral. People came from all quarters to it, and when many prayers had been said over the coffin, and many masses had been said or sung for the rescue of his soul from the pit, they started to march in imposing procession to Maybole. As they proceeded on their way, there came across the country a great, black crow—I am sure it was a black crow, because the adjective has never been lacking in any version of the story that I have come across—and sat down on the coffin, that was being

carried on a "chariot" drawn by four black horses. The crow folded its wings and croaked hoarsely, and under its Satanic weight the four black horses stood still. To move the coffin an inch was beyond their power; but when the black crow rose from the black coffin, the black horses went off with their burden quite easily. Then a hideous storm arose. The lightnings flashed, the thunders roared, the rains fell in drops of unexampled size, and, amid the warring of the elements, the coffin was thrown to the ground and riven, and its occupant carried off to Tophet.

Except on the principle that the Deil was always particularly hard on his own children, I never could make out why he should have been so very unkind to one who had served him so well. But the carrying off is otherwise vouched for. For it so happened that just about that time the skipper and crew of an Ayr vessel beheld a woeful spectacle in the Mediterranean Sea. They were off the island of Sicily, where Mount Etna, one of the craters of the nether fires, is to be found to this day; and in the evening what should they see but a fiery chariot come towards them careering along the surface of the deep! Round it were many deils, but he that drove it was none other than the muckle Deil himself. And as the ship met the chariot, the skipper put his speaking trumpet to his lips and cried out: "From whence

to where?" And the driver made answer: "From Culzean to Hell." Such an answer might have daunted almost anybody except a skipper, but as skippers never lie nor swear, nor do anything that is wrong, this one's courage did not slack off in the very slightest. "What cargo?" he shouted. "The soul of Sir Archibald, the Wicked," was the blood-curdling reply. And sure enough that was so, for seated in the chariot was the writhing presentment of Sir Archibald himself; and the skipper beheld with his own eyes the fiery horses dash up the slopes of Etna and disappear in the crater, amid smoke and flames and great din of internal and infernal commotion. The moral is never to persecute the saints.

This was the Deil at his very worst. But then, had not Sir Archibald Kennedy brought it all on himself? And was he not reaping what he had sown, the whirlwind as the product of the wind? It came to that in the end, that only those who had given themselves up to sin were liable to be ensnared of the wiles and of the gins and traps of the Enemy. It was a very much better side of his character that he turned to Changue, of the hills and valleys of lonesome Barr. Changue was a smuggler, and, like many smugglers and other Bohemians, he was not infrequently exceedingly hard up. One day when he was wandering depressed and fearful along the road, whom should

he meet but the Deil? Changue was a brave man, and so, though he knew quite well who the civil-spoken person was, he fell a-talking to him. The Deil did not require to be told that Changue was in a sore plight, and he proceeded to apply to his wounded spirit the balm of the promise of many good days to come; days when he should overcome other smugglers and gaugers, when he should distinguish himself as the best fighter among them all at the Fair, and when he should be able to sell his wares at a big profit, and not be cheated out of the money, as smugglers and other people who are not in a position to sue generally are. That was all very good—the Deil was an angel of light and sweetness. But what was to be the price of it all? The usual thing: the soul of the man who bargained with the Deil for worldly prosperity. Changue demurred a bit, but he was very hard up, and he consented; and the Deil bade him good-day and went away.

They were fat years for Changue that followed, and his barns were full to the door. The Deil poured in wealth upon him, and asked no questions. Neither was he in any hurry to carry off the smuggler's immortal part. Therefore, it was an occasion for very great surprise with Changue when the Deil one day appeared suddenly to him on a hillside, and said that he had come for his soul. Changue point-blank refused to give it up.

And, the truth to say, when one comes to think of it, it is very doubtful whether you are bound even in honour to keep any faith with the Deil; certainly no man is warranted in throwing away his soul if he can manage to keep it. The Deil smiled a grim smile, and with that Changue drew his sword, just the very same as Christian did when he espied the foul fiend coming over the valley to meet him. With the point of his sword, evidently a true Damascus blade, he drew a ring round about himself and the Deil, and the pair struck a bargain there and then. If the Deil could drive Changue out of the circle, then Changue must go; but if Changue could knock the Deil out, then he was to have his soul back again. Surely nothing could be fairer.

A local Homer has sung in much detail the incidents of that memorable conflict. In a succession of desperate rounds, Changue lopped off the Deil's horns, split one of his cloven hoofs up the middle, snicked off the end of his tail with the fork on it whose touch was death, sliced his dragon wings right at the place where they were joined to his body, and struck him such a desperate lick across the mouth that the suffering Deil was able, without any further training, to grin from ear to ear. And while the Enemy was writhing in his agony, Changue sent him with one final stroke spinning like a teetotum out of the circle.

The Deil howled and moaned for very shame, but he recognised, like a gentleman, that he had lost the day; and, setting at naught the force of gravitation, he rose from the rocky ground and sped away. And Changue beheld him no more. According to the story, the smuggler became a changed man, and the inference is that, when he did come to die, he died in all the odour of such sanctity as a respectable smuggler might have been expected to have possessed. Which may not have been small, for in those days it was much less sin to be a smuggler than it was to be a black Prelatist.

Before I proceed to deal with the Deil's bairns, let me say just a word or two about witchcraft. As late as the seventeenth century, ministers of the Gospel and judges of the High Court of Justiciary were condemning men and women to be "brunt" at the stake, because they were warlocks or witches. The belief in witchcraft was not confined to one class. King James himself, the High and Mighty Prince, of whose virtues and extraordinary graces the most of us have read in the church on the Sabbath Day in the dedication that precedes the Authorised Version of Holy Writ, had so powerful a conviction of the diabolic presence in the persons of certain suspected old men and women, that he sat out the torture of a doctor,

who was a reputed wizard, "with great admiration"; and Presbyters and lairds thought they were doing God service when they consigned the poor creatures to the flames. But it is worth bearing this in mind, that with so-called witchcraft there was a good deal of immorality combined. Witches under torture confessed many stupid things; nearly all of them admitted gross immorality. The war, therefore, was, so far at least, in the interests of purity, and that is worth putting to the credit of the fathers.

The warlock Laird of Fail had something of Michael Scott, the wizard, about him. He was an adept, a specialist, in the black art. The Deil had instructed him in many things of which it had been well for him that he had never heard, and he was able to accomplish many wonders that ought never to have entered into the heart of man to conceive. Who he was, save and except that he was the Laird of Fail, a warlock, the reputed natural father of Maggie Osborne, and a friend of Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, is not very clear. But the friars of Fail, who made good kail on Fridays when they fasted, and never wanted gear enough so long as their neighbour's lasted, have stamped the place of his home with indelible fame; and perhaps, when one is dealing with a warlock, it were not wholly wise to be

over-specific. It must be assumed that he was up to all the customary tricks of the trade, and that he was accomplished in such common attainments as taking away milk from cows, turning the milk sour, changing himself into a black cat, and even riding a stray moonbeam or a broom, and sailing the sea in a cockle-shell. But he had also a certain measure of individuality and a sense of humour about him that individualised him beyond the most of his warlock contemporaries. One day he was out hunting with Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, and they came to a farm-house, where the guidwife was brewing the ale for the shearers. At the instigation of Sir Thomas, the Laird put a pin—obviously a pin wrought upon aforetime by magic—above the door of the house, and the result was that, as soon as anybody crossed the threshold, he, or she, whoever it was, at once began to dance. And thus the remainder of the story is told in the ballad by Train:

"'O good Sir Thomas of Craigie, tak'
The warlock Laird of Fail
Away from me, for he never shall prie
A drop of our shearers' ale.'

The Laird he cried on the auld gudeman,
And sought a drink of his beer;
'Atweel,' quo' he, 'kind sir, you shall be
Welcome to all that is here.'

But just as he pass'd under the pin
He roared out, 'Warlock Fail,
Away from me, for you never shall prie
A drop of our shearers' ale.'

And aye as the canty shearers they
Were coming hame to their kale,
The Laird and Knight, from every wight,
Sought some of the dinner ale.

'Ye's got the last drop in a' the house,'
They cried, as they hurried in;
But everyone at once began
As passing under the pin:

'O good Sir Thomas of Craigie, tak'
The warlock Laird of Fail
Away from me, for he never shall prie
A drop of my dinner ale.'

And they would have sung the same till yet,
Had not the old Laird of Fail
Drawn out the pin before he went in,
To drink of the shearers' ale."

Another instance of the grim humour that appears to have characterised the warlock Laird occurred also in association with this same Sir Thomas of Craigie. The two were looking out of the window of Craigie House one day, when they saw a carrier driving his cart up the avenue. The cart was loaded with vessels of earthenware, and the Laird made a bet with Sir Thomas that without any personal communication whatever with the carrier, he would make him break

every jar in his cart. Sir Thomas reciprocated, and the Laird at once got his spells to work. Turning round to make quite sure that his load was all right, what should the carrier see but a fierce bulldog, with a massive jaw and protruding eyeballs, and with a foam-flaked tongue sticking out of its mouth, glaring with evident intention to spring upon him from the interior of a jar in which he had unaccountably taken up temporary quarters. The carrier was not a man easily daunted, and at once he struck at the dog with the heavy end of his whip and sent the jar into smithreens. In an instant the dog had changed its quarters to another jar, which also the carrier smashed; and so on went the encounter, the dog reappearing by turn in every jar, until the last of the lot had been reduced to fragments. Thus the Laird won his bet; it is to be hoped that, between them, he and Sir Thomas Wallace paid the carter compensation for the crockery that they had been the means of causing him to break.

It came about all in due time that the warlock Laird must die. A warlock's deathbed cannot, one would imagine, be a very impressive scene. When a man has given himself up to the Deil, then it is in accordance with the fitness of things that to the Deil he must go. The Laird knew that the sort of service in which he had been engaged could not go unmarked; and, having a

gift of second sight beyond that which ought to have been written of him, he called his friends and attendants to his bedside, and solemnly warned them that they must not remain in the house after his body had been removed from it; for, as soon as it was taken out of the door, disaster was sure to befall the dwelling. The servants were wise in their day and generation. They had the coffin, containing the body of the warlock Laird, brought down into the hall, and ropes adjusted to it so that it could be dragged out from without. And a very lucky thing indeed it was for them that they made such preparations, for no sooner had they pulled the coffin clear of the building, than down tumbled the old castle, and some of those who were nearest it only succeeded in escaping by the skin of their teeth. Whether this destruction was providential, or whether it was the Deil's way of putting a dramatic climax to the life of his servant, it would be hard to say; but in either case, the moral seems to be about the same—it is a risky business at best to serve the Deil.

Often and often has the story of Maggie Osborne, the witch of Ayr, been told. Maggie is part of the history of the town. She is one of its personalities, and she would have to be included in any list of a dozen of its best known

citizens. In notoriety she would have to take rank with John Willock and John Welsh, with John Duns Scotus, surnamed Erigena, to signify that he was of Ayr (albeit the honour of his birth has of recent years been filched from the town and transferred to Duns); with the Chevalier Ramsay, with John Loudoun Macadam, the roadmaker, and with Robert Burns—not to go so far back, or to include such distinguished temporary sojourners as William the Lyon, Sir William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, or even such honorary burghers as John Grahame of Claverhouse and the bloody Dalziel. Maggie is not definitely or specifically historical. There is a blank in the burgh records at the period at which she died, and there is no mention of her in the records of the Kirk-session. But that a reputed witch called Maggie Osborne lived there can hardly be any doubt whatever. Legends do not crystallise without some foundation.

As time and as generations go, it is not by any means a far cry to the last half of the seventeenth century, and it is next door to an absolute impossibility to conceive that she is an emanation of the too fertile imagination of some gifted townsman, who evolved her from the depths of his own inner consciousness, and sent her spinning along the years a Deil's bairn of the first and greatest magnitude. What is probable

is this, that Maggie Osborne, a reputed witch, was tried, condemned to death, and burned at the stake for witchcraft, as many another woman was before her, and that in the course of time she was elevated to a sort of rallying-point for all the witch stories that were current in the neighbourhood, and that had aforetime done duty by other witches less conspicuous than she. About the time when Maggie lived, Ayr, like other places in Scotland, was mightily concerned over the events that led up to the second Reformation, and people were beginning to question whether it was really in accordance with the fitness of things to charge old women with being witches, and whether the time had not come for relegating witchcraft itself to the category of exploded superstitions.

But at present, and not to wander off into the wilderness of speculation, let us take Maggie Osborne as she has come down to us, a natural daughter of the Laird of Fail, the landlady of a little public-house in the High Street of Ayr, and as typical a child of the Deil as anybody would ever desire to encounter. We have seen already that she could raise a storm at sea, by virtue of the power conferred on her by her infernal lord, and sink a ship by the evil product of her unholy incantations. But Maggie could do far more than that. She could fly through the night sky

all the way from Ayr to Galloway to foregather with other witches, and with warlocks, in some remote spot of meeting beyond the Nick of the Balloch, and she was so much favoured of the Powers of Darkness that ever as she flew she was accompanied by a train of little imps, whose feet were so hot that, as they descended to walk across the top of Carrick Hill, they burned up the grass so as to mark an highway that for many a long day afterwards was known as Maggie's gait to Galloway. And she had the gift of transforming herself into a cat, or even into such an insignificant thing as a beetle, when circumstances rendered it necessary that she should escape from the guise of the human form divine that she so dishonoured by her occupation of it. And hereby there hangs a tale.

One day Maggie Osborne was on her road through the air to Galloway when she saw a funeral approaching. It was distinctly annoying for a witch woman to be caught in this fashion. No doubt there was a minister at the funeral—perhaps more than one—and she knew well enough that there was a sworn feud between the Kirk and her own master, and that if once the ministers were to catch her in the very act of riding on nothing through the sky—a most desirable acquisition in itself when divorced from all Satanic agency—it would go very hard with

her. So Maggie at once changed herself into a beetle, and crept in beneath a hardened clod of earth in the cart-track. Why she did not get out of the road altogether is not quite apparent, but one must take history as he finds it in witchcraft, and not be too anxious to account even for things that require more explanation than they are ever likely to get. Maggie very nearly came to grief that time, for one of the mourners put his foot on the clod, and the witch had enough to do to escape being crushed to death. However, she managed it somehow.

By that occult power given her of Old Nick, Maggie knew who the man was who had put his foot on the earthen clod, and she vowed against him and his all the vengeance in her calendar. The man lived with his wife and family in a little house on Carrick Hill that was overhung by a crag. He was a good Christian, and it was his invariable custom to ask a blessing on his food. By this, and other corresponding means, he managed to keep himself out of the power of the Deil and all his emissaries, and for a considerable time Maggie Osborne waited her chance in vain. But one day she obtained and took her opportunity. There had been a heavy snowstorm. Carrick was white from the shore to the top of Carwinshoch, and, where it had drifted, the snow lay

in great deep wreaths. It was then that, sitting down to his breakfast with his wife and family, the unlucky man forgot to say grace, and actually plunged his horn spoon into the porridge without the saving preliminary. The witch was at hand, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, and at once rolled a tremendous snow-wreath over the cliff on to the cottage. And that was the end of the man, his wife, and all the children save one. The penalty appears to have been out of all proportion to the offence; but here again we may not inquire too closely as to cause and effect; it is enough to accept things as they have come down to us, and to remember that witchcraft was not under the moral code, but outside of it. The one member of the family who was not smothered in the snow was a son, who was a sailor; and we have already seen how Maggie conjured up a crowning storm and sent the vessel in which this son of a hapless sire was sailing, with all hands, to the bottom of the sea.

It will be remembered that Maggie Osborne had a servant girl, whom she set to watch the progress of her incantations in their practical effects on raising the storm. Against this maiden she vowed vengeance. Why, it has not transpired, but it is a fair enough inference that she began to be afraid of a girl not a witch, who

knew too much, and resolved to get rid of her. Maggie had many witch associates, and she called them to her aid. She sent the girl into the brew-house by night to superintend the brewing of the beer, and specially to keep an eye on the boiler in which were the "worts." Then she and the rest of the hags changed themselves into black cats, and proceeded to disport themselves after the fashion of the infernal felines that they were. They jumped into the brew-house by the windows, and after the usual antics and caterwauling common to the race, they proceeded to dash themselves upon the girl, with the intention of toppling her over into the boiler among the boiling worts. The girl, however, was quite equal to the occasion, and dipping the big ladle into the scalding brew, she distributed its contents promiscuously among the pussies, taking care to dispose a generous share upon the glossy back of one specially fierce cat that had been assailing her with extra fury. Thus resisting the devils, they fled from her with many wild howls begotten of agony and of rage, and she saw them no more. Next day Maggie Osborne was an invalid, confined to bed, and quite unable to attend to business. The girl went up to her bedroom to see how she was getting on, and found her both sore and sulky, and holding the bedclothes tight up under her

chin. It seems to have occurred to her that the cats were not the genuine article at all; and, determined to satisfy herself on the point, she dragged the blankets from the resisting hands of her protesting and anathematising mistress, and discovered what she had suspected, that her back was either skinned or blistered. Thus witchcraft had received its own reward, and like the good, fearless Christian that she was, the girl went off straightway to the minister and told him the whole story. He in turn communicated with the authorities, and forthwith Maggie Osborne was carried off to the Tolbooth and consigned to a darksome cell within its walls. Where now was her capacity to change herself into a beetle? Gone. And yet how useful would it have been had she been able to effect the transformation, and to fly away through the grated window to the wilds, and to the fresh airs of freedom and of the sunlight without!

The minister of Ayr at the time was the Rev. William Adair. He preached in the Old Church, and was, so far as we know, a very worthy man. It was his business to thwart the wiles of the Deil and of all his bairns. Specifically, Moses had said: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and Mr. Adair acted up to the command. There is no official account of Maggie's trial, but it may be assumed that, if she refused to confess, the

Court tortured her till she was ready to admit anything and everything in the hope of getting put out of pain. From pushing needles in below their nails to making them dance in iron shoes upon a hot plate, there was hardly anything that ingenuity failed to bring to bear on the warlocks and witches to wring from them the story of their affinity with the Deil. Maggie, as a matter of course, was found guilty, and was sent back to the Tolbooth to stay there till the day should come round for her burning.

In the dead of the night, and the silence of it, the Deil came to her in her cell, and listeners, told off for the job, heard them talking to one another; and, among other things, they heard Maggie rate the Deil soundly for having permitted her to fall into the hands of the enemy. The Deil defended himself as best he could, and put Maggie up to a plan by which she was to acquire her freedom even as she stood among the faggots and the wreathing smoke. In pursuance of this plan, she had word sent to the minister the next morning that she was ready to confess voluntarily; and Mr. Adair, expecting to be told a tale that would lay the harrows upon the back of every warlock and witch of the covey of which Maggie herself was so distinguished a member, hastened to the prison. But it was not there, but at the pyre, that the confession had to be made,

and Maggie stipulated that before she made t she was to be provided with two bran-new tin plates that had never known water.

The request was a curious enough one; it was even suspicious in its way; but witches were not ordinary people, and it was the duty of the minister to find out all he could; and accordingly a man, probably a burgh officer, was sent off to the tinsmith's to bring the plates along to where the witch was in waiting to be consumed. The morning was wet, and as the messenger was hurrying back, he let one of the plates fall into the gutter. Being, like all town's officers, a person of thought and of originality, he concluded that the plate would just be as good as new if only he were to dry it. And so he dried it, and it looked all right. But things are not always as they seem; and so it was here. Standing with her feet among the faggots, Maggie took the two plates, and with great deftness attached the one to her one shoulder and the other to her other. Thus they became to her as wings, and to the horror and astonishment of the minister and the onlookers generally, she began gradually to ascend into the air. It was then the wet plate failed her. It flapped all right, but it could not do its fair share of carrying, and a burgh officer had time to hook his halbert into Maggie's petticoats and drag her down into the fire again. That was the

end of Maggie Osborne. The flames began to ascend, and as they seized on the person of the luckless witch, she again reproached her master for his scurvy treatment of her. "Oh, ye fause loon," she cried, in the hearing of the people, "instead o' a black goun ye hae gi'en me a red ane. Hae I deserved this for serving ye sae lang?" These were her last words, and no doubt soon thereafter, and when the fire had done its work, the Deil carried off her soul to his dark dominions.

If one has to trust to tradition for the things that have to be written about Maggie Osborne, there is plenty of reliable evidence concerning Bessie Dunlop, the Dalry witch, for Bessie had to take her stand at the bar of the Court of Justiciary on the 8th of November, 1576; the indictment on which she was charged remains, and her own confession is enshrined in the records of the Justiciary Court. Bessie was a weird woman of another sort than the notorious witch of Ayr. She never did anybody any harm, she never turned herself into a black cat or a beetle, she never incanted and brought destructive storms up from the vasty deep, she never rode through the air, and she never held communings with the Deil. Yet she was a "notour," or well-known witch, convicted of "sorcery, witchcraft, and incantation, with invocation of spirits of the

Devil, dealing with charms, and abusing the people with devilish craft of sorcery aforesaid," and she was "brunt" at the stake for the evil deeds that she had diabolically done in the body.

Bessie Dunlop had a familiar, whose name was Tom Reid, who had been slain nearly thirty years before at the battle of Pinkie; an honest-looking, elderly man, with a grey beard and a grey coat, grey "breeks," and white stockings gartered above the knee, a black bonnet on his head and with lappets over his ears, and carrying a white wand in his hand. Bessie was in sore trouble, and as she was going along the road she foregathered with Reid. He bade her good-day, and asked at her what ailed her. She told him that her "man" was sick, that her baby was dying, and that she had an ill cow, a combination that, as she said, was quite enough to account for her sadness. Tom ministered a qualified consolation. The baby and the cow would die, he observed, but her husband would recover; and then he disappeared in a little hole in a wall near the yard of Monkcastle; a hole too small to permit a mortal man to get in at it. Things turned out as the familiar said they would, and after that he often foregathered with her. He tried hard to get her to renounce her Christianity, and promised her much worldly substance if she would, but Bessie told him—and he was very

angry to hear it—that she would be riven at horses' tails before she would do any such thing. After that he showed her four men and eight women who had come from Elf Hame, well-dressed, responsible-looking persons everyone of them. The women were very kind to her, and tried to persuade her to go with them, but she never opened her lips in their presence, and they had to give her up as a bad job, and, as they passed away from her, a hideous, ugly blast of wind followed them. Later, a stout lady called on her and took a drink of water from her hands. That was the Queen of Elf Hame herself. And, still later, as she was walking by the side of a loch, who should come by but a great company of riders, men and women, who disappeared in the loch with many a hideous rumble?

These things, and others of the same sort, Bessie confessed, and they were taken down in black on white. Tom Reid gave her the wisdom necessary to cure people with herbs, and to discover who it was that had stolen things that had gone amissing. She was consulted by Lady Johnstone, whose daughter was suffering from cauld blood that went about her heart and caused her to pine away, and she gave her medicine to cure her; by Lady Thirdpart, in the barony of Renfrew, regarding a coin that had gone amissing; and by Lady Blair concerning the whereabouts

of certain clothing that had disappeared. There was a daughter of William Blair of the Strand, who was going to be married to young Craufurd of Baidland, and Tom sent word to her, through Bessie Dunlop, that, if she married that man, she would either die a shameful death, slay herself, cast herself down over a crag, or go raving mad. That was enough for Miss Blair. She threw Craufurd overboard, and he went and wedded her sister.

The likelihood is that these, and various other stories of the same sort, were extorted from this poor woman by the aid of torture. As might be expected, they wrought her ruin, and, as has been said, she was burned at the stake.

There was another notable witch, this time at Kilwinning, and her name was Elizabeth, or Bessie, Graham. One day when she was drunk she uttered various threats and imprecations against another woman, and ten days later this other woman sickened and died. It was not long before the minister came to hear of it, and for thirteen weeks he kept her a prisoner in the steeple. He was quite sure that she was a witch, and he therefore made it his business to visit her regularly and to try to compel her to confess. This she steadfastly refused to do. Fortunately, there came round a celebrated witch-finder, who rejoiced in the classic name of Bogs. It was Mr.

Bogs' business to find the devil's mark, and, in order to discover it, he kept sticking a long brass pin into the witch's body. Naturally, she kept shrieking and screaming, but he went on long enough to discover a spot into which he thrust the pin without the witch uttering any protest; in other words, he had persevered so long that she had fainted away, and was, for all practical purposes, inanimate. Here then, according to Mr. Bogs, was proof positive. This was the spot from which the Deil had sucked a mouthful of blood, which afterwards he had spat out into his hand in order to christen the novitiate with it; and every witch-finder knew that whosoever among women thus carried the mark of the Beast was a sorceress and worthy to die. The minister would have consigned the weird woman to the flames right off, but the chief persons in the parish, other than he, declared the whole story mere clatter, and the reverend caretaker of the Kilwinning morals had to proceed most warily. So he and the bellman had a turn at playing the spy on the prisoner. In the strength of the Lord they went up the steep steeple stairs in the night, and hearkened at the keyhole; and what should they hear but the witch in close confabulation with her infernal lord and master? The minister confessed that he could not make out a word that she was saying,

but that, of course, was proof positive that it was the jargon of the pit; and the bellman averred that, from what he could make out, it was something very bad indeed. Whatever it was—and the likelihood is that it was the poor creature praying to Heaven for release—it so scared the bellman that he came perilously near tumbling down the stairs and breaking his neck. The minister had another interview with the witch by day, and urged on her the duty of confession, but she remained obdurate, and went protesting to the scaffold. And thus, nor is this case only, but elsewhere all over Ayrshire as well, the land was purged of the sin and the crime of witchcraft.

Save in the general sense, which applies more or less to the most of us, Ayrshire was never specially, and beyond her sister shires, prone to superstition. She was not without her mermaids, her creatures of the rivers and of the forest glade, her fairies and her elves, but none of them all has ever earned for himself, or for herself, any striking or outstanding place on the pages of local history. But there are one or two legends that must be recalled, and one or two legendary immortals that must be brought upon the scene, ere we let the Deil and his bairns go free. The Deil of Ardrossan is one of the best known of the shadowy personages who held truck with the

great soul-destroyer. But in sooth, there are two Deils of Ardrossan at least. One of them was Sir Fergus Barclay, who in his day was inordinately given to the sport of horse-racing. The other Deil, the real one, had presented him with a magic bridle, and whenever he put the bit into the mouth of his horse, nothing under the sun could ever prevent that horse from winning. The fleetest steeds that trode the turf had to give way to him when he set his teeth to the steel that had been forged in the fires of Erebus. The other Deil was Michael Scott, the wizard, reputed a mermaid's bairn, and said to have taken up his abode in the old castle. Michael had a horse that was powerfully gifted in the art of neighing or "nichering"; and once at least he turned that gift to first-rate account, in order to have Scotland freed from the "pow siller." This was the poll-tax, and, according to the tradition, it was the Pope of Rome who was responsible for it. Michael undertook to see what he could do to have the obnoxious tax removed, and he flew away to Rome on the back of his remarkable steed, to interview his Holiness who then sat upon the throne of St. Peter. The Pope was unsympathetic, and refused to do it, and Michael told him that, if he remained obdurate, he would call upon his horse to "nicher" three times. The Pope smiled.

What avail could the nichering of a horse have against the power of Rome?

But apparently not even Popes know everything, after all, as this particular one found to his cost. For, at the very first of the nichers, the whole city, founded and all as it was on the seven hills, shook to its foundations, and at the second "the lum pigs cam' doun"; whereupon the Pope hurried up with all the canonical speed that was in his power and remitted the most obnoxious tax, and home rode Michael Scott triumphant. The same interesting warlock, who was apparently on the most intimate terms with his master, succeeded in persuading the Deil to build a bridge from the Cumbrae to Hunterston Point. He tackled to the job single-handed, undaunted by the greatness of the enterprise. It so happened that the Deil, when he was bridge, or dyke, building, had a rooted aversion to being seen; and so, when a stranger came suddenly on him, and, astonished at the vast bridge just on point of completion, with its one pier near West Kilbride, and the other on the Cumbrae, complimented him on his success, he scurried away in a flame of fire just before he had completed his undertaking, and the whole structure, most unfortunately, collapsed like a pack of cards, and tumbled down with a mighty splash into the sea.

Wherever there are good Ayrshire stories

going, you may depend on it that a Kennedy is not very far away. This Kennedy, to whom I am now going to refer, fared much better at the hands of one of the Deil's bairns than did the wicked Sir Archibald at the hands of the Deil himself. There were great goings-on at Culzean, dancing and eating and drinking, and other hilarities and mirth, and when the revel was at its height, a little bare-footed girl came to the door with a can in her hand, and asked for a jugful of ale for her mother who was sick. The butler, like a great many other butlers, had scant regard for mendicancy and mendicants of every degree, and only condescended to give the girl a drop in the bottom of her can ; and when she asked for more, he bade her begone. But just then the Laird came on the scene, and ordered the butler to fill up the can, and she departed rejoicing. Some time afterwards it chanced that the Laird was travelling in Spain, and either because he was a Protestant, or because he had come into grips in some way or other with the law of the land, he found himself a prisoner of the Inquisition, the occupant of a cell, and doomed to perish at the stake the very next morning. The Laird was much cast down, as any of the rest of us would have been in the same circumstances, and his thoughts were wandering far away to Carrick, when he was startled beyond measure to see

standing by his side a little bare-footed maiden; the very same girl whose ale-can he had ordered to be filled to the brim. With a most commendable consideration for the laws of rhyme and the future needs of the balladist, the girl gave him her hand and said—

> "Laird of Coe,
> Rise and go;"

and, thinking he was in a dream, the Laird rose and went. Bars and doors and windows and walls were nothing, neither the tracklessness of the night sky, and in a very little, flitting over the sleeping lands with incredible speed, the Laird found himself standing at the door of his own home. He was much astonished, and he turned to his flying companion for an explanation. And she said—

> "Ae guid turn deserves anither,
> Tak' that for bein' sae kind to my mither,"

and vanished. Thus kindness was rewarded, even when done to one of the very bairns of the Deil himself.

It is perhaps hardly fair to class the mermaid with the Deil's bairns, but I do it because, whether she was of the family or not, it was as true as anything ever could be about a

mermaid, that she used to sing in such enchanting strains in the ears of sailors and fishermen, of rovers and of vikings, that they were lured by the siren sweetness of her notes to their destruction. And, in any case, the mermaiden was uncanny, and not of the earth earthly. Her home was in the coral caves of the deep, alternated with outings on rocks where she performed her toilet, combing her long locks the while she crooned those enthralling songs that wrought such havoc with the volatile affections of those who went down to the sea in ships.

Ayrshire had four mermaidens. The first compassed the destruction of Udolphe Ederic, a sea rover. If Udolphe had lived in our days, he would have been called a pirate, had he persisted in pursuing his calling on the high seas, and a gunboat or a torpedo boat would have been sent out to deal with him, and the chances are that he would have ended his career on the scaffold in the most prosaic fashion. But he lived in times when piracy was not piracy, but quite a respectable profession; and when he was on the western waters, the douce and decent mariners had to make quite sure he wasn't in sight before they ventured to leave port. One cruise he took his nephew with him, and as the vessel was lying under the lee of

the Cumbraes, the young man heard a sweet voice singing in the calm of an autumn day.

The young man was charmed with the voice, and he went right away and told the rover what he had heard. Udolphe Ederic's brow darkened. He had made up his mind to sail that very evening, and although he was no stranger to what the siren song portended, he resolved to put to sea all the same. His nephew essayed to remonstrate with him, but it was of no avail, and so the anchor was hauled up, the canvas was cast loose and set, and the little vessel was headed down the firth. The wind rose, and where the waters had been calm they were crested with foam. "The west wind is a gentleman, and goes to bed," but that night was an exception to the rule, for the wind blew more and more, and the seas ran higher and higher, and there were strange voices in the night; song and cries and wailing. The rover might have gone right round and run for it, but Udolphe Ederic was not so made, and the end of it was that while the mermaid sang, the vessel was dashed on the rocks, and the rover and his crew went to the ocean caves.

The second of the mermaids plied her wiles on a fisherman of the Maidens. In the evening he was wandering along the shore. The sun, going down, had emblazoned a pathway to the

westward, and from amid the burnished waters there came to the young man's ears the music of a voice wondrously sweet and enticing. The fisher took to his boat, and went sailing out into the west—"out into the west as the sun went down"; and ever as he sailed the sweet sounds receded also. The gold died out of the heavens, the gloaming gave place to the night, the stars came out, and the winds began to moan and to sigh, and to call upon the waves to rise in their might and take their prey. The waves did as they were bidden. They rose and revelled and stormed; and the fisherman went home to the Maidens no more. And if this was not an act of a Deil's bairn, it would be hard to say what it was.

The third mermaid was much more interesting and more lovable. Her home among the caves in the sea bottom was somewhere in the vicinity of Dunure Castle. These were the days when Dunure was light and gay with life, and when the song and the dance relieved the stern work pursued of the rovers and raiders whose home it was. The years of the shadow and of the ruin were as yet far away, and neither ivy spray nor sheltering sea-bird, nor wise bird of Minerva or of the night, had place in the halls of the sea-o'erhanging fortalice. The young laird was walking along the coast one day, when who, or

what, should he see but the fairest maiden that had ever come within the range of his vision? Long and yellow was her hair, bright and beautiful her countenance, and she was robed in garments that were not such as young Dunure had even seen before. At once he was smitten of her charms, and as there was much less conventionality in those days than there is in ours, he took the liberty of introducing himself to the lady. A pleasant intercourse followed. The young laird had many a walk by the shore, and many a tryst with the maiden, and at last he persuaded her to wed him and go home with him to Dunure. His mother thought strangely of her daughter-in-law, and the inmates generally felt queer and eerie in her presence. She tried to be happy, to do the duties of a wife, but every now and then it was as if her heart was far away, and as if she would fain have exchanged the joys of the castle for other delights. She became a mother, and the presence of her baby stilled a while her longing. But one evening, while she was nursing it at the castle gate, she heard a voice that called her; and clasping the infant to her breast, she began to run in the direction of the sea. There was none who dared try to stay her going; all the attendants could do was to stand and stare and wonder. They saw her reach the margin of ocean, then plunge into its

cool depths, and from that day she was never seen more. And everybody realised that she belonged to another race than that of man, that she had been nothing else than a stranger and a pilgrim in grey Dunure, and that her real, permanent abiding city was where the seaweeds grow, and where the sea nymphs dwell in their caves in the realm of Father Neptune.

The fourth and last of the mermaids used to come up the Stinchar at nights, and enjoy herself sitting singing on a big black boulder close to the Castle of Knockdolian. It so happened that the lady of Knockdolian had a baby ; and while she would be doing her best to sing the baby to sleep, there would ascend to the nursery windows the sounds of the mermaid's singing. The lady did not like it. The siren notes kept the child awake ; and, moreover, there was something uncanny in this strange creature of the sea coming night upon night and crooning away in the darkness right under the windows of the castle. Resolved to get rid of the mermaid, the lady bade her servants break the stone in pieces, and they had to obey. That very night the mermaid came forth of the stream and sought her favourite seat. It was gone, and she wailed and wrung her hands ; and as the inmates of Knockdolian listened to hear what she would say, they heard her sing :—

"You may think on your cradle,
I'll think on my stane,
And there'll never be an heir
To Knockdolian again."

Not long afterwards the cradle was found overturned and the baby lying dead beneath it, and in due time that particular family died out. Thus the mermaid returned evil for evil.

This prophecy recalls that of the murmuring voice that once was heard wailing up and down the valley of the River Ayr—

"Sundrum shall sink,
And Auchincruive fa',
And the name of Cathcart
Shall in time wear awa',"

in days that were yet young enough for spirit voices to be heard on earth. The words are to be taken figuratively, and not literally, and in that respect they have been, at least, partially fulfilled; for the Cathcarts, to whom the prophecy really applied, have long since ceased to possess Sundrum and Auchincruive. Their name, however, is in no immediate danger of fading away out of Ayrshire.

In the middle of the eighteenth century there was still, naturally, a good deal of superstition rife in Ayrshire. In 1720 a man in Dreghorn

was reported to the Presbytery of Irvine to have consulted a person "supposed to have a familiar spirit" respecting a sock that had been stolen from him. In 1746 the same Presbytery had to deal with a man "for using an unlawful charm, by causing a key to be turned in the Bible for discovering some stolen leather." And in 1784, when Burns was living in the parish of Mauchline, a man called James Vance "compeared" before the session "and declared that he heard James Dykes desire James Gay to come in and see if the spell woman would cut the cards in order to see who had stolen the Lawn." It is hardly to be wondered then that the good folks of Kilbirnie, Beith, and Dunlop shook their heads when Tam Giffen, the warlock, went by. Tam, a sour, dour, stoutish-built man, pursued his calling as a mendicant in these parishes; and his uncanny notoriety stood him in good stead, so far as the ingathering of alms was concerned. One or two good stories of him are handed down by J. D. Brown, the author of "Ballads, Founded on Ayrshire Traditions" (Kilmarnock, 1850), and with these we close the story of "The Deil and his Bairns in Ayrshire":—

"One day, when the water of Lugton, which separates the parishes of Beith and Dunlop, was rolling from 'bank to brae,' and the holms were

in a flooded state, Tam was observed on the opposite bank by some people. Happening to lose sight of him for a few minutes, what was their astonishment to find Tam standing beside them high and dry, although the water was more than thirty feet in width, and no bridge nearer than two miles! To the hurried question how he got across, he quickly replied—'Hoo? I didna come across at a'. I was in a hurry, and just came through below it.'

"At another time, a remarkably pious man, in the parish of Dunlop, during a high gale of wind, ascended to the roof of his house, which, according to the custom of the time, was of thatch; laid a number of stones and sticks on the roof, to prevent the wind blowing the thatch away; and while on the roof, according to his own account, a tremendous whirlwind swept round and nearly overthrew him. He mentally ejaculated, 'God save me,' and held on by the rigging. His bonnet and wig were blown away—where, he could not tell. Next day, after the storm was abated, he went again on the roof of the house, to mend the damage which had been done. Looking down, he perceived 'Tam' standing at the foot of the ladder, and surveying him with a most sinister gaze. 'Ye held on weel yesterday,' exclaimed Tam; 'gin ye hadna whispered, "God save me," we wad ha' blawn ye doun, but we

took awa' your wig and bonnet: gae awa' doun to the well in the meadow, and ye'll get them lying there, aside the sauch bush.' The man accordingly went, and, in the exact spot, found his wig and bonnet.

"An honest blacksmith, one evening, going to weld two pieces of iron together, called on his apprentice, who was reported to be a heedless youth, to come and assist him in beating the iron. After calling once or twice, and receiving no answer, he angrily exclaimed: 'I may just as weel cry on Tam Giffen.' 'What do you want?' whispered a voice behind him, which was no other than Tam's. 'I was just fleeing through the air wi' a wheen o' them that's gaun awa' to dance in Kilbride Kirkyard the nicht, and I thocht I wad come in an' see what ye wanted wi' me.' 'Did ye come in at the door?' exclaimed the astonished blacksmith. 'No, I just drapped doun the lum—but I maun awa', or they'll miss me;' so saying, he instantly disappeared.

"At last 'Tam' was discovered lying dead on the banks of the Garnock Water, near Garrit Linn, in a wild and solitary glen, in the parish of Kilbirnie. According to tradition, he was murdered by the fairies for disclosing some of their secrets. He was buried in Kilbirnie Churchyard; and his grave is still pointed out to the curious."

THE AULD TOUN, PARTS ADJACENT, AND THEIR BURNSIANA

If it be that there are ministering spirits, whose business it is to watch over individual man and bear a hand in the regulation of his destinies, why should there not also be guardian angels of communities? The man dies; not so the community. The man is laid away to rest; on and on goes the community from one generation to another. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten," but the community lives, no matter how the churchyards grow. Why, then, should the community not have a ministering spirit, a guardian angel, to itself?

Not seldom have I so thought as I stood looking out, under the moon and when the silent stars shone, over the sleeping town. Its continuous life is upon me—the life that was here when the ancient Caledonian launched his coracle upon the waters of the river—the life that was heard in the serried tramp of the mail-clad men from Rome—the life that embraced Wallace and Bruce and the heroes of the Scottish War of Independence—the life that was shared in by Welsh and Willock

and the dour sons of the Scottish Covenants, that effervesced in the feudalists who reddened the High Street causeway with blood, that brought Cavaliers and Roundheads to share in the alternating fortunes of their troublous times—the life that was here when, in the fulness of time, the inspired stripling from the wayside clachan of Alloway came in to where the Sand Gate used to stand, to be taught of Murdoch in the old thatched house on the edge of the sand-drift without—the life that shall still be here when we who to-day inhabit Auld Ayr shall all be laid to rest amid the sands piled up of long silent seas and long hushed winds, and forgotten of the foot that passeth by.

In this particular sense, in the spirit if not in the letter, the Ayr of to-day is the very same Ayr that Burns knew. Mightily changed indeed as to its stone and lime is the ancient burgh, a twentieth-century-looking place, that, with iron band and electric cable, has knit the venerable Cross of ancient Prestwick to Alloway Kirk and the Doon that flows mid its banks and braes to the sea. But Ayr is the creation of the centuries, and not of the days or the years that are passing, and Burns is as much her son as ever he was, though the Nith, springing to life amid the uplands of his own Ayrshire, has been singing his slumber song these hundred years and more.

High up in the steeple there is a dingy, dusty little bell. Beneath it swings the big town bell that, with clamorous tongue, rouses the royal burghers to work, reminds them that the day is done, bids them to the house of prayer, cries aloud when there is fire abroad, peals its solemn joy over festivals, and tolls dolefully for the dead. That big bell—it is but a creature of the day, and knows nothing. Not so the dusty little bell, spectral in the gloom and where the winds never cease to sigh; that is the bell of the drowsy dungeon clock that numbered two that memorable night that—

> "Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
> The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside"—

and that still in its own way bears a hand to tell the passing hours. Hearken! it is just going to strike the hour of midnight. There—ting-tong, ting-tong, ting-tong, ting-tong—are the four quarters, and the big bell clangs the hour. Well, it is the little bell that says "Ting"—that is all it does; that is its specific work, and to this day it does it well, though full two hundred years must have come and gone since first it knew the belfry of the Tolbooth. The Wallace Tower that "swore the fact was true" has, as to the stone and lime thereof, disappeared these more

than seventy years, and there is another Wallace Tower in its place. In its belfry there are two bells, and they both ring in an indeterminate, indiscriminate sort of a way; one of them is the witness to the two o'clock averment solemnly made that night of the dialogue between the Sprites of the Twa Brigs.

There is a noise of many waters, a rushing sound in the air. Over the sea it is dark, and out of the darkness comes the solemn monotone begotten in the depths of ocean and articulate where sea and river meet. That is the roaring of the bars of Ayr. Burns knew it; Burns heard it; it is there still. It was in the summer days, when the lark was in the sky, and the wild rose was blooming in the hedgerows, and the hum of bee was on the meadows, that "Ayr, gurgling, kissed her pebbled shore;" now it is winter, gloomy winter—

> "When heavy, dark, continued a' day rains,
> Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And, from Glenbuck down to the Rattan quay,
> Auld Ayr is just one lengthened tumbling sea."

The Rattan quay is a memory, but the tawny river, bearing the tribute of brawling Coil, of stately Lugar, of the moorland Greenock, and of haunted Garpel, hastens seawards as of yore with

the myriad memories of the lad that was born in Kyle, and as I stand on the ancient bridge and watch the flood go by, it sounds as if its many waters were saying—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallowed grove?
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
To live one day of parting love.

. . . . . .

Ayr, gurgling, kissed its pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thick'ning green—
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene."

Up on the night wind comes the roaring of the bar; beyond it, the sullen voice of ocean. And the dream passes.

But the bridge—the Auld Brig—the brig of the many centuries—it is upon its ancient parapet I lean and watch the river pass. It was a venerable brig when Burns knew it.

"Auld Brig appeared of ancient Pictish race,
The verra wrinkles Gothic in his face."

Much the Spirit of the New Brig reviled it. Did he not, unmannerly, cast up to its

"poor narrow footpath of a street,
Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet!"

Did he not speak despitefully of its ruined formless bulk o' stane an' lime? Did he not scornfully dub it an ugly Gothic hulk? Yes, but that was in the morning of the New Brig's life, when it sat as a queen and knew no sorrow, and when it thought the morning stars were singing to it for very joy that it had been made. Where is that brig now? Think of the prophecy, fulfilled these five-and-twenty years to the very letter:

> "Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
> Though mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide,
> And, tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
> I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn.
> . . . . . .
> Then doun ye'll hurl—deil nor ye never rise—
> And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies."

What a blessed time that Spirit of the Auld Brig must have had of it when he beheld the ruin accomplished that he had himself predicted! To-day a second New Brig stands, but meekly, where stood its predecessor boastingly; for the Auld Brig, more crazy eild than ever, protected by concrete buttresses to keep the scour of the river from its piers, threatening periodically to bring its life's long chapter to a close, and doomed, alas! even as I write, to its own "restoration," holds it with its electric eye; and doubtless, too, when the winter storms are out,

the Gothic-faced guardian of the ancient way shrieks tauntingly of coming doom in the ears of the youthful Spirit to whom it has been given to watch the unfolding destinies of the bridge that is New, Number Two. And is it not a dreadful experience to be haunted by a ghost with Gothic wrinkles in his face, to be pursued of a spectre that may have known Robert the Bruce in the flesh, that was sprightly in its early goblinhood when it saw the sky redden to the burning of the Barns of Ayr, and whose infant ears may have been saluted with the shouts of the Norsemen who stayed—and stayed in vain—to storm the Castle of Ayr, what time King Acho, of the race of Thor himself, in that noble galley that was the joy of all the beholders, was leading his fleet on to Largs to be smitten jointly of the winds and of the Scots, first under the lee of the Cumbraes, and then on the Ayrshire sea-coast adjacent!

Very ancient is this street—this historic High Street. Like the life of the community, it continues while the generations pass. It changes with the years—it is ever changing, but it is the same High Street that gave back the tread of the Ironsides of the Protector, and that saw Middleton, the King's Commissioner, at the head of his roystering royalists marching in state to the Cross to drink "Success to the Devil" and

all his crew; along which swung the heroes of Scotland's hard fight for liberty, adown which tramped the mailed legions from the banks of the Tiber. Its age, its associations, the whispering secrets of its gables place it above and beyond criticism. Up there at the head of the Kirk Port, where aforetime the Black Friars had their home, stands the Auld Kirk, Cromwellian as to its age; and in its pulpit—the very same pulpit whence the Word is spoken to-day—preached the Rev. Dr. Dalrymple—

> "Dry'mple mild, Dry'mple mild, though your heart's like a child,
> And your life like the new-driven snaw."

And in the Kirkyard, lulled to sleep by the murmuring river, rest the progenitors of not a few of the people of Ayr. There is a house here and there on the High Street that Burns knew, quaint, old-world houses that have fallen sadly into arrear with their style and their accommodations—houses that send us back in thought to the fathers and mothers who never knew what steam was, who never dreamed of a world to arise that would annihilate distance and time, and who would as soon have thought of lapsing into Latitudinarianism or Socinianism as they would of believing that in the fulness of time electricity would compass the globe, that towns

would hum and throb, and shine with the transmitted strength of the streams of water and the cascade in the thorny den, and that man would speak with man over intervening hundreds of miles.

This is the place—this High Street—for relics of the good old days when Burns walked the causeway. Are there not to be found in that ancient thatched hostelry the identical chairs on which Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnnie were wont to sit over the reaming swats that drank so divinely? Did not these rafters echo and answer to the laughter that rang out when the Souter tauld his queerest stories? And was it not from this very house that Tam o' Shanter set forth that October night to dare the storm and the devils of the open country?

I hear a suggestion, an emanation of Auld Cahoun, that Tam o' Shanter is not "a Tale," but a legend, a myth, a creation of the poet's brain. Perish the very suggestion! Why, the farm of Shanter is there to this very day to witness to the literal truth of the narrative, and hundreds of thousands of persons, Jew and Gentile, Briton and American, free and freer in that Burns swept the strong chords of a "Man's a Man," have stood at Kirk Alloway and gazed with the eyes of flesh and of sense upon the identical winnock bunker in the east where the

identical Auld Nick sat and screwed to the protesting heavens the music of the nether spheres. You might as well try to deny that Cutty Sark was a reality as that Tam o' Shanter took the gate to Carrick that night when he beheld what it was not good that a mortal should see, and heard what it was not good that a mortal should hear. You might as well dare affirm, and hope to live, that Ayr is surpassed by other towns in honest men and bonnie lasses. And there, above the hostelry door, is a representation in oils of Tam o' Shanter, Maggie the mare, the Souter, the Landlord and the Landlady, that depicts the setting forth of the Carrick farmer that night of nights. I myself can answer for the authenticity of the picture; for I saw it being painted.

This ride of Tam o' Shanter—what of the route he took? I fain would rest me in the cosy kitchen on such a night and keep the immortal cronies rooted by the ingle-neuk; but "nae man can tether time nor tide," and out into the storm I must needs go, and pursue the track of the Carrick farmer as he hied him homewards. These were not the days of a road all macadamised and running straight from Ayr to Alloway. Low in its fertile valley spread, Ayr was a Sleepy Hollow where the honest men were wedding the bonnie lasses, and never thinking,

never dreaming of the coming morn of the burghal awaking; a morn ushered in, in no small degree, by the birth of the inspired bairn of the wayside clachan. If this twentieth century could evolve a Tam o' Shanter, which is very doubtful, and if he were to emerge from the hostelry yclept the Tam o' Shanter Inn, he would ride straight away south-west, and in due time, sticking to the tramway rails and the line of the electric lights, he would certainly reach the Doon. Not so then. Beyond the Royal Burgh's bounds there was farm-land and broken ground—moorland, bent-land, knowes—and then the burgh common with its green knolls, its sands, its little intersecting burn, and its bridle paths: and to get at the familiar road Tam o' Shanter had to turn his own back and Maggie's tail to home, and ride northward and eastward a couple of hundred yards until he reached the Carrick Vennal. There is no "Vennal" there to-day, for the Vennal has been modernised into a street, and the street has a theatre in it, and the theatre, like all other theatres, makes it unnecessary for amorous man to haunt the environs of pre-Reformation churches by night and during thunderstorms, in order to satisfy his longing for short-skirt Terpsichoreanism.

Reaching the upper end of the street, Tam o' Shanter emerged upon a road that no longer

exists, and which, therefore, you can no more see than you can behold the British Fleet when it is not in sight. It ran westward, however, what time it ran, till it struck the Racecourse Road at the foot of Miller Road, and then passed, probably pretty much on the lines of the existing highway that is the chief avenue of Ayr's villadom, into the fields and sandy knowes that flanked on the burgh side the town common that now—enclosed, levelled and green—is used as a race-course and a golf-course, and as a summer camping ground for the Ayrshire Yeomanry, and for the military generally, as well as for ordinary recreative purposes. Crossing the common by a road that the eye of modern man hath never seen, the while the Deil, prince of the power of the air, was demonstrating that he had business in hand, Tam o' Shanter came upon a track that, with Burns as guide, we may still pursue—

"By this time he was cross the foord,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd,
And past the birks and meikle stane
Where drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane,
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn,
And near the thorn aboon the well
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel'.
Before him Doon pours a' his floods,
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,

The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll,
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk Alloway seemed in a bleeze."

Before Tam o' Shanter went down the brae that led to the ford, he had to pass the ruins of the chapel of St. Leonard's. Who this saint specifically was that had a chapel sacred to his memory, I am unable to say; and no good Catholic that I have asked has the slightest idea. His church was small; around it there were graves; hard by there was a grove of trees, and among these trees, away back in the latter half of the sixteenth century, a group of Carrick gentlemen lay concealed until Sir Thomas Kennedy, the knight of Culzean, attended only by his servant, came riding along, when they fell upon him in good old feudal fashion, and hacked him to death because he was on the side of the Earl of Cassillis and they were not. Chapel, graves, grove, have all disappeared; so, too, the road by which Tam o' Shanter descended to the ford by which he had to cross the Slaphouse Burn. The ford itself may still be seen a few yards west of the public road, and in a return to earlier conditions it might still be utilised; but the highway, the car road, is at hand, and, even if one were to elect to walk up through the field of the ford, there is a bridge

handy. Therefore the ford may be regarded as a thing of the past, and there is now no earthly reason why even a chapman should be smothered in the snow in his search for a crossing on the snowiest night of the snowiest season. The meikle stane reposes humbly beneath a hedge less than two hundred yards from where the unhappy chapman ended his days. Who Charlie was, and the circumstances under which he broke his neck-bane—his collar-bone, according to the legend which prevails in the immediate vicinity — none can tell. The adjective applied to Charlie makes it lucky for his reputation that his surname has been swallowed up in the mists of antiquity, and all that need be said for the stone—a common-place boulder that might weigh a couple of hundredweight—is that it is still available for like occasion should its services be required. Meantime it rests, biding its time.

The cairn in whose proximity the hunters found the body of the murdered bairn has gone, and great is the pity thereof. Not because there was any need to commemorate the finding of the bairn untimely bereft of life, but because the cairn itself was of infinitely greater consequence archæologically than if its vicinity had been a veritable howf for murdered bairns. For there, according to the chronicler, in days that have

long, long since given in their account, the legions of Rome encountered the Scots, and made great slaughter of them. There was another battle in these parts in which Coilus, the King of the Britons, figured prominently in a campaign against the Picts and the Scots, but the centuries are many that have elapsed since these warriors fought, amid confused noise and garments rolled in blood, for the Westland of Scotland, and we may not be too dogmatically precise as to their warrings, but this much is authentic — that beneath the cairn, early last century, there was found a large and beautiful urn amid a heap of bones. No doubt the urn had originally contained the ashes of some great chief or warrior. Beshrew the vandalism that could not let the heroes rest in peace, and that had to desecrate their grave and strew their bones to the four winds of the heavens! Could they not have let the warriors sleep on where they were till the trumpet should sound, and they should arise and stand once more on their feet — an exceeding great army? Now, the exact site of the cairn itself is matter for conjecture. It was on the old, discarded road, however, and not very far to the rear of Burns' Cottage.

From the cairn Tam o' Shanter rode on till he came to the Doon. As the fires flashed in the

sky they lighted up the slopes of grey Carrick Hill beyond the river, and amid the lulls of the storm Tam o' Shanter could hear the roaring of the flood. The rains had been out on the hills beyond Dalmellington, every little tributary had been running full, and now the Doon, turgid and brown, was pouring a full head of water onward to the sea. Riding parallel to the river, Tam o' Shanter reached the well, the scene of Mungo's mother's suicide. Who this lady was, more than that she was Mungo's mother, there is no saying. The insinuation, based on the fact that St. Mungo was the patron saint of Alloway, that the poet may have been satirically indulging in a hit at the immortal Kentigern, is hardly warranted, and, on the whole, it is perhaps safer to class Mungo's mother among the Great Unnamed—with the chapman who was smothered in the snow, and drunken Charlie who broke his neck-bone in contact with the meikle stane. A merciful oblivion clusters about the lady's personality.

It was at this point, as he passed above the well, that Tam o' Shanter's eyes lighted on the Kirk. There it stands to-day, silent and lonely, in the heart of its God's Acre. Not lonely in the sense of lack of company, for there are the dead lying within its walls, and without its walls, and there are the myriad associations that are spirits

clustering thick between its gables ; but lonely in that its closer surroundings, those that are the work of man, are but of yesterday. The Brig of Doon has long companied the Kirk, Carrick Hill has long looked down upon it, the Doon has long sung psalms to it, but a Kirk that was there before the Reformation, and that knew both priest and presbyter, cannot well be anything else than solitary.

I walked round it the other night. The moon was shining, a cold wind was blowing out of a clear nor'land sky, the brown leaves on the trees were dolorously rustling and falling, the courts of the little sanctuary were silent and deserted, and all was so solemn, so eerie, that one could not but recall that wild, weird scene that Tam o' Shanter saw. The kirk ablaze ; up there Satan hotching and fidging fu' fain ; the floor thick with reeling carles and carlins ; Cutty Sark flinging high her graceful limbs to the skirl of the unconsecrated bagpipes ; and, most gruesome of all, the corpse candle - holders all around, glaring, gazing out of eyes that were stony and dead. Here is the very window—a poor, wee window it is—through whose glassless frame Tam o' Shanter, caring not a boddle for deils, gazed with admiration upon the cantrips of Nannie in the heart of the weazened hags whose very look was enough to have spean'd a foal.

The storm rages overhead, the flashing fire, the rolling thunder; between the peals comes the "Weel dune" of the enraptured farmer; 'tis but an instant, and the lights are out, the corpse candle-holders scurry back to their graves, and there is the race and the chase and the halloa for the keystone. Who but Burns could have told the tale? And the thousands come to the Kirk from near and far—from the shores, from the seas, and from beyond the seas—and every day of the year they look, and they tell, and they assimilate the gospel of the wondrous tale.

But my business is not with the poetry of the bard, but with the material and geographical Burnsiana of this heart, this *penetralia*, this *sanctum sanctorum* of the land of song. And, even concerning this, why should I pause by Doon when immortality in song has smitten its banks and braes into the heart of Scotland, and when English-speaking men and women sing of them wherever the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes floats free to the breezes?

Why should I stand and muse on the parapet of that ancient Brig? I seem to see two scenes in the which it played a prominent part. When the blood feud raged, there crossed its high back one winter's day, when the snow fell so thick that no man could see a lance's length ahead of him,

a party of the partisans of Bargany, the bold Bargany from Girvan-side, and the young chief himself was riding ahead; ere evening the little force had been broken by the Cassillis faction of the same Kennedy family by the Brockloch Burn, and the gallant young chief was borne, bleeding and stricken, back across the Bridge to die in Ayr. And I seem to hear in the night wind the coming of the chase from Alloway Kirk, Tam o' Shanter ahead, the hellish legion straining hard behind. Better for Tam o' Shanter that he had never been born than that the semi-goblin covey had caught him as he flew! But thank Heaven for the magical keystone that stayed the chase of that awesome crew.

Neither is it fit or needful that I should stay by the monument that raises its graceful columns above the river, and in whose grounds, in that little house among the shrubbery, the silent freestone Immortals hold court. The nights through, the years along, they sit, and they sit, and they sit; and the smile never, even in gloom's deepest depths, fades from their faces. What do they do when the nights are drear, and the Doon runs, and the storm rushes? Do they go back, in the converse of freestone man with man, to the days of the High Street hostelry? Does the Souter still tell his queerest stories to his beloved cronie? Or does Tam o' Shanter hear in the sighing storm

the whir of the warlocks and witches that never-to-be-forgotten night of devilry and din? And above and beyond all, are they not heartsick and a-weary of that endless concourse of visitors that repair to their court to pay homage and tribute money at their shrine? Still less need I pause by the Cottage, the Auld Clay Bigging, the material heart of the natal land of Burns. Thither, too, the tribes go up, the tribes of Scotland go thither; to Alloway, as neat and clean as the lassie of "O' a' the Airts," — transmogrified Alloway, neither new nor old, neither cold nor hot, neither consistently one thing nor another— Laodicean Alloway after its own kind. There are houses and villas of yesterday in the little street; they are cheek by jowl with the white-washed walls and "thack" roof of Burns' birthplace. There is a post office and a telegraph office: look over that hedge into the Cottage grounds, and you will see where Satyrs dance and Ceres smiles to the waving fields of the autumn, ancients that aforetime were affiliated to the New Brig of Ayr, and that must have excited the admiration of the boy Burns as they did that of many boys after him. There is the electric car gliding up to the door of the Cottage; within the walls of the Cottage and in the museum adjacent there are whispering memories of a chequered life, and of songs that gladden

and that sadden, that charm and that ennoble, that are growing old in years, and that are as young as the feelings and the needs and the aspirations of the day. The Cottage, you will see, has come through a process of restoration. For me, I should have preferred it as it was, if only it could have endured changeless; but that could not be. For even as the stones of the Scala Sancta have been worn by the knees of the creeping pilgrims to Rome, so the Auld Clay Bigging was in danger of its many pilgrims and their devout but heavy tread, and of succumbing to the elements that are the decaying fingers of time. If it could not be that the Cottage should remain for ever exactly as it was, then be it said that the restoration is worthy, and that the Cottage is none the less the Cottage that it has been "snodded up" and made worthy. But of its museum and relics I do not stay to tell. These would open up another field than that of the *Burnsiana geographica.*

Alas! that it should have to be said that change is even now being written upon the whole scene of Alloway, and that henceforth, from Cottage to Doon, it must cease to be the quiet nook that so well befitted the birthplace of an Immortal! Already right to the very banks and braes there stretches from Ayr the cables and the lines of electricity, and all day long the cars go to and fro,

all heedless of the changes their presence denotes upon the realms of classic song. Hard, too, by Alloway's auld haunted kirk the ground yawns, and in the depths—deeper than where the dead sleep—the locomotive, fire-breathing and space-devouring, daily and nightly flits athwart the classic stream and plunges into the depths on the hither side ere climbing the brae to the slopes and the sunlight of Carrick. Is this the spot where witches danced and Satan's seat was? Can it be that any self-respecting warlock or witch should remain where, close by, the bull's eyes of the electric cars are shining, and where the steam horse goes ploughing and plunging along? Shall any Cutty Sark ever again make free with the proprieties within these bare, roofless walls, and kick calisthenic defiance to the lightning's flash and the thunder's roll?

I trow not. For there arises a vision of villadom extending all around—streets, terraces, crescents, circuses, drives, avenues, walks, and all the other resources of contracting and suburban civilisation—tea gardens also, a band stand, a coffee-house, buffets, restaurants, ice-cream saloons with real Italians in them; nick-nack shops for the sale of articles made of wood grown on the banks of the Doon; French and German barbers; perhaps

— Heaven help us! but who can tell? — a Hydropathic!

From the consideration of which things I refrain, in that it is always worse to contemplate such things than to meet them and to deal with them as they arise.

THE MEMORIAL POETRY OF THE AYRSHIRE COVENANTERS

When we use the word "Memorial" to describe the poetry to which we are about to refer, we do so strictly in the Covenanters' sense. Their gravestones were "Memorials" to the men who slept beneath them. The plain, unadorned tombstone that stands in the Old Churchyard of Ayr to commemorate the "sacred number of triumphant saints" who lie beneath it is a "Memorial"; so also is the monument that stands solitary in the place of the moss-hags and the wild birds of the moors and fens, where the Camerons and their friends were slain by the horsemen of Earlshall in lone and drear Ayrsmoss. So also with the many other stones and monuments that mark the graves of the martyrs; the graves that were in the mind of Robert Louis Stevenson when he penned one of his exile poems to S. R. Crockett, and wrote—

"Be it granted to me to behold you again in dying,
Hills of home, and to hear again the call,
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peeweeps crying,
And hear no more at all."

And when we use the word "poetry," we mean nothing more than the rude, crude, strong lines, sometimes vengeful, never weak or inexpressive or veiled in their meaning, that have been engraven on the Memorials. In one sense, perhaps, these emanations of the bards of the Covenant ought not to be called poetry at all. They are, many of them, but rhymes, employed to cast into permanent form the dying of the martyrs, the cruelty of those who consigned them to death, and the hatred nourished and cherished of the instruments of the persecution in robbing them of their lives. The poetry is not after the Christian Charity type; it is Old Testamentish in its force and directness. The men who made it knew what it was that they wanted to say. There was no beating about the bush with them. In their eyes the persecutors were the instruments of prelatic tyranny and of the powers of darkness, and, as will be seen from the examples that follow, they were apparently as much concerned to pass on the names and the deeds of these men, as they were to ensure that the righteous should be kept in everlasting remembrance.

The memorial tombstone in the Old Churchyard at Ayr, "a small Tribute by the Incorporate Trades of Air, Anno Domonie, 1814," marks the spot where "lie the Corpse of James Smith,

Alex. M'Millan, James M'Millan, John Short, George M'Kertny, Jno. Graham, and John Muirhead, who suffered Martyrdom at Air, 27th December, 1666, For their Adherence to the Word of God and Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation," and on the reverse side it carries those lines :—

> "Here lye seven Martyrs for our Covenants,
> A sacred number of triumphant Saints.
> Pontius M'Adam th' unjust Sentence past,
> What is his own the world shall know at last.
> And Herod Drummond caus'd their Heads affix,
> Heaven keeps a record of the 'sixty-six.
> Boots, thumbkins, gibbets, were in fash'on then,
> Lord, let us never see such Days again."

The poetry is obviously a reproduction from a memorial erected, as most of these memorials were erected, shortly after the Revolution. When it was written, the first bitterness had not passed away; it was still remaining in the breasts of those who had witnessed these "triumphant saints" done to death, and who had seen their heads bleaching on the burgh ports, and the hatred was still intense against the men who had been immediately responsible for bringing about their martyrdom. M'Adam was Pontius (Pilate), and Drummond was Herod; and thus these men were placed in the

category with those who were the tools of Jewry in bringing about the death of the Founder of the Christian Faith.

What Mr. A. B. Todd, in his "Scottish Martyrs," calls "this best of all the epitaphs of the Covenanting era," was inscribed on a stone that marked the spot in Ayr where a Ballantrae man, Andrew M'Gill, suffered in the good cause in 1684. M'Gill died upon a scaffold that was erected to the westward of where the Ayrshire Bank used to stand; probably about what is now Cathcart Street, but what, prior to its being built upon, was open, rough land. Thus ran the poetry, passed along through the medium of the "Cloud of Witnesses":—

> "Near this abhorred Tree a sufferer lyes,
> Who chus'd to fall that falling Truth might rise,
> His station could advance no costly deed,
> Save giving up a Life the Lord did need.
> When Christ shall vindicate His Way He'll cast
> The Doom that was pronounced in such a haste,
> And Incorruption shall forget Disgrace,
> Designed by the Interment in this place."

In this instance there is little or no vindictiveness; it was enough for the poet to make sure that M'Gill was memorialised in true martyr fashion, and to assume that ample compensation was sure to be vouchsafed to the sufferer, once

he had taken his place beneath the altar with the other "souls that were slain for the Word of God" and for the faith, and who called unceasingly for the avenging of their blood.

Kilmarnock has at least two good examples of memorial versification in the Laigh Churchyard. In 1683, John Nisbet, a native of Loudoun, and a relative of another Covenanting worthy of the same name and parish, was "taken by Major Balfour's Party" and hanged, because he had been in arms at Bothwell Bridge, and because he refused to give any information as to the whereabouts of his namesake, who was a warrior of repute and a very hard fighter for the Covenants. On the reverse side of the stone are these lines:—

"Come, Reader, see, here pleasant Nisbet lies,
Whose Blood doth pierce the high and lofty skies.
Kilmarnock did his latter hour perceive,
And Christ his soul to Heaven did receive.
Yet bloody Torrance did his Body raise,
And bury'd it into another place;
Saying, Shall Rebels lye in Grave with me?
We'll bury him where Evil-doers be."

The action of "bloody Torrance" in disturbing Nisbet's remains throws a lurid light upon the vindictiveness of some of the persecutors. Who Torrance was is unknown. Enough that he carried his vengeance beyond the grave so far

as he could against Nisbet, and it cannot be doubted that many a sympathiser with the Covenanting cause, and with the men who gave up their lives to it, must first and last, as he stood by the mound and read the inscription, have cursed the man who thought to do dishonour to the sacred dust. John Ross and John Shields had been out in the affair of Rullion Green, and had yielded themselves prisoners on the promise that their lives would be spared. But in these days no faith was kept with rebels, these men were tried and executed at Edinburgh; and in order to terrorise that part of Ayrshire, then seething with rebellion against the terrorism that was the accompaniment of the attempt to coerce Scotland into Episcopacy, their heads were sent westward to be displayed at Kilmarnock. No doubt they bleached long days in face of the sun; in the end they were taken down and interred in the Laigh Churchyard, and in due time the inevitable poet arose and did them honour. Thus :—

> "Our Persecutors, mad with wrath and Ire,
> In Edin'h members Some do lie, Some here,
> Yet instantly united they Shall be,
> And witness 'gainst this Nation's perjury."

Here the poetry is put into the lips of the Martyrs themselves, and it gives expression to an idea that was often in the mouths of the

protestors. They were witnesses, even as those mystic two of the Apocalypse were; Scotland had covenanted to God against both popery and prelacy, and she had broken her vows; and in due time these witness-bearers would stand up in their lot at the end of the days and testify against the national perjury.

The two martyrs who lie in Irvine Churchyard, James Blackwood and John M'Coul, had also taken part in the abortive rising that ended so disastrously in the battle of the Pentlands. They "suffered at Irvine," according to the inscription on the tombstone, on 31st December, 1666, the last day of an eventful and a tragic year for the west of Scotland. "Stop, Passenger," says the inscription, "thou treadest near two martyrs, James Blackwood and John M'Coul," and then follow the date of their execution, the Scriptural "reference," "Rev. xii. 11," and the lines:—

"These honest Countrymen whose Bones here lie,
A Victim fell to Prelates' Cruelty;
Condemned by bloody and unrightous Laws,
They died Martyrs for the good old cause,
Which Balaam's wicked Race in vain assail;
For no Inchantments 'gainst Israel prevail;
Life and this evil World they did contemn,
And dy'd for Christ, Who died first for them.
'They lived unknown
Till Persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to Heaven.'"

The stone bears further that it was "erected by friends to Religious Liberty, 31st December, 1823," but the story of the "honest countrymen" is obviously of a much older date than that, and was in all probability copied from the memorial that preceded. The "prelates' cruelty," the "bloody and unrighteous laws," and the "Balaam's wicked Race," are all in the best style of the Covenanting poets, who did their best to immortalise the sufferers as soon as the Revolution had made it safe for them to burst into song, or for the Presbyterians to celebrate in "Memorial" the men who had done so much for, and had died in what was beyond any doubt, the cause of freedom.

The parish of Fenwick is rich in Covenanting memories, and the churchyard is exceptionally blessed in memorials of passing interest. "Here lies the dust of John Fergushill and George Woodburn, who were shot at Midland by Nisbet and his party, 1685." Tradition has handed it down that once, when the dragoons had searched the house wherein Woodburn lay hidden, and had ridden off without finding him, one of their number returned, and told the mistress of the dwelling to tell him to cover himself up better next time, for he had seen his foot sticking out through the straw. The poet had to dignify the martyrdom with a brief tribute :—

"When bloody prelates
Once these nations' pest,
Contrived that cursed
Self-contradicting test,
These men for Christ
Did suffer martyrdom.
And here their dust lies,
Waiting till He come."

Close by rests the body of Peter Gemmell, an ancestor, by the mother's side, of Robert Pollock, the author of the "Course of Time." Gemmell was "shot to death by Nisbet and his party, 1685, for bearing his faithful Testimony to the cause of Christ; aged 21 years." This man, testifies the poet:—

"This man, like holy Anchorites of old,
For conscience sake was thrust from house and hold;
Bloodthirsty Redcoats cut his prayers short,
And ev'n his dying groans were made their sport.
Ah! Scotland breach of solemn vows repent,
Or blood thy crime will be thy punishment."

And in close proximity to Gemmell sleeps James White, "who was shot to death at Little Blackwood by Peter Inglis and his party, 1685." White was one of a party of twelve who had met for prayer at the house of Little Blackwood, and who were surprised by the troops while at their devotions. He was armed with a firelock,

and the light caused by the explosion of the gunpowder made him a mark for the soldiers, who shot him dead on the spot. It is said that a trooper, Patrick Inglis, cut his head off with an axe, carried it to Newmilns, and next day kicked it about in sport as if it had been a football. To this gruesome incident allusion is made in these memorial lines that are engraven upon his tombstone :—

"This Martyr was by Peter
Inglis shot.
By birth a Tyger rather
Than a Scot.
Who that his monstrous
Extract might be Seen,
Cut off his head and kick'd it
O'er the Green.
Thus was that head which
Was to wear a Crown,
A foot ball made by A profane
Dragoun."

To the north of the church is the burial-place of the Howies of Lochgoin. James Howie suffered much during the persecution; his son, John, has attained to immortality as the author of "The Scots Worthies." The original stone has gone, and another has taken its place; but here is the old rhyme as it is found in the Appendix to "John Howie's Life" :—

"The dust here lies under this stone
Of James Howie and his Son, John;
These two both lived in Lochgoin,
And by Death's power were called to join
This Place. The first, November twenty-one,
Years sixteen hundred ninety-one;
The second, aged ninety year,
The first of July was brought here,
Years seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
For owning truth made fugitive,
Their house twelve times, and cattle all
Once robb'd, and family brought to thrall.
All these, before the Revolution,
Outlived Zion's friends 'gainst opposition."

"And He said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation.—Rev. vii. 14."

This is probably about as crude an example of the Covenanting versification as has been passed down to us. It has nevertheless the familiar characteristics about it; it is redolent of the times that gave birth to it, and the spirit that dictated it; and it is a pity that when the memorial was "restored," somewhere about 1865, it was improved out of existence.

In Galston Churchyard lies a martyr of whom nothing is known, save through the inscription on the stone that marks the place of his sepulchre. On the reverse side of the stone it is recorded, "Renewed in 1823. The figure below represents Galston Covenanters' flag"; and the flag bears the inscription, "For God and

State, Kirk and Covenants, and the Work of Reformation. Galston. God is ever the same." The martyr memorialised and the lines to his honour are in this fashion commended to posterity :—" Here lies Andrew Richmond, who was killed by bloody Graham of Claver-House, June, 1679. For his Adherence to the Word of God and Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation.

> When bloody Tyrants here did rage
> Over the Lord's Own Heritage,
> To persecute His noble cause,
> By Mischief framed into Laws.
> 'Cause I the Gospel did defend,
> By Martyrdom my life did end."

The martyr's stone at Newmilns is not in the churchyard at all, but on private ground. Beneath it lies John Law, " Who was shot at Newmills, At the relieving of 8 of Christ's Prisoners, Who were taken at A meeting For Prayer at Little Blackwood, in the Parish of Kilmarnock, in April, 1685, By Captain Inglis and his Party, For Their Adherence to the Word of God and Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation." Inglis had the eight prisoners referred to in custody, and he was to shoot them on the morrow. Law, as the inscription bears, was one of the relieving party. A soldier was in

the act of discharging his firelock at them, when he was himself shot dead: and as for Inglis, it is said that he was so frightened that during the onslaught he hid below a bed. There is no reference in the story of the release to Law's death, and it may be inferred that he was caught later on, and had summary vengeance done upon him. Thus the native and sympathetic bard memorialised him :—

"Cause I Christ's Prisoners relieved,
I of my Life was soon beriev'd;
By cruel Enemies with rage,
In that Rencounter did engage.
The Martyr's honour and his Crown
Bestow'd on me, O high Renown,
That I Should not only believe,
But for Christ's cause my life should give."

Practically the whole known story of John Smith is told on the upright stone that memorialises him in Muirkirk Churchyard :—"Here lyes John Smith, who was shot by Col. Buchan and the Laird of Lee, Feb., 1685, for his Adherence to the Word of God and Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation. Rev. xii., ii. Erected in the year 1731."

EPITAPH.

"When Proud Apostate
Did abjure, Scotland's
Reformation pure, and

Filled the land with perj-
Ury, and all sorts of In-
Iquity, such as would not
With them comply, them pe-
Rsecute with hue and
Cry. I in the fight
Was overtane, and fo-
R the truth, by them
Was slain."

The story of the murder of John Brown of Priesthill by Claverhouse is so well known that we need not re-tell it even in brief. His house that stood on the moor has disappeared, but the spot where he met his death is marked by a monument, and the stone that covers his remains lies flat, within a dyke about four feet in height, big enough to prevent the sheep or cattle getting within. Thus the inscription runs :—" Here lies the body of John Brown, martyr, who was murdered in this place by Graham of Claverhouse for his testimony to the Covenanted Work of Reformation, Because he durst not own the authority of the then Tyrant destroying the Same, who died the first day of May, A.D., 1685, and of his age 58." As will be seen, the opening letters of each line spell out Brown's name, with an "e" added to complete the versification :—

" In death's cold bed the dusty part here lies,
Of one who did the earth as dust despise,
Here in this place from earth he took departure,
Now he has got the garland of the martyr.

Butchered by Claverhouse and his bloody band,
Raging most ravenously over all the land.
Only for owning Christ's supremacy,
Wickedly wronged by encroaching tyranny.
Nothing how near soever he to good
Esteemed, nor dear for any truth his blood."

In Ayrsmoss there lie Richard Cameron, his brother Michael, and other seven of the confessors. The Camerons had ridden through Sanquhar with a small company of horsemen, and at the Cross of that ancient burgh they had issued their declaration—in their case a declaration of war upon the royal house of Stuart. That was rebellion; a price was set upon the head of Richard Cameron; they were hunted into the wilderness, and, caught in the moss one bright day in the month of July, 1680, the Camerons, with seven associates, John Gemmel, John Hamilton, James Gray, Robert Dick, Captain John Fowler, Thomas Watson, and Robert Paterson, were slain. They were honoured in due time with a martyr's stone, and later with a chaste obelisk that marks the spot where they died and where they were buried. "Here lies," the inscription on the old stone runs, "the corpse of that famous and faithful preacher of the Gospel, Mr. Richard Cameron, who, with several others, fell here in an encounter with the bloody enemies of Truth and Godliness. July 20, Anno. 1680." And these are the accompanying lines:—

"Halt, curious passenger, come here and read,
Our souls triumph with Christ, our glorious head.
In self-defence we murder'd here do ly,
To witness against this Nation's perjury."

The lines are in the true Covenanting style. The souls of the martyrs have gone to triumph in glory: their death was murder: and should the nation fail to remember its sworn obligations under the national Covenants, they will witness against it.

Even more characteristic, if possible, is the poetry engraven on the Martyrs' Memorial at Mauchline. The grave is in the village, and it is covered by a flat stone, twelve feet long by six broad. The inscription is: "Here lie the Bodies of Peter Gillies, John Bryce, Thomas Young, William Fiddieson, and John Bruning—Who Were Apprehended and Hanged Without Trial at Mauchline, Anno. 1685, according to the then Wickeds' Laws, for their Adherence to the Covenanted Work of Reformation. Rev. xii., 11." John Bruning was taken prisoner at Mauchline, where he was herding cattle; none of the others belonged to the district. Lieut.-Colonel Drummond was their judge, and fifteen soldiers were the jury; and with a Court so constituted, the verdict was assured beforehand. Their execution was most callously conducted. Bibles were refused them; they were not permitted to pray at the

scaffold; grave clothes and coffins were denied them, and the soldiers dug a hole under the gallows and flung them in together. It was no wonder that the poet's spirit was stirred within him, or that he used strong language:—

> "Bloody Dumbarton, Douglas, and Dundee,
> Moved by the Devil and the Laird of Lee,
> Dragged these five men to Death, with gun and sword,
> Not suffering them to Pray nor Read God's Word.
> Owning the Word of God was all their Crime,
> The Eighty-Five Was a Saint-Killing Time."

As a stigmatising of "Dumbarton, Douglas, and Dundee," a trio wrought upon by the devil and the Laird of Lee, the opening lines are in their way quite a masterpiece.

Carrick had its martyrs as well as the other two divisions of the county. Its stretches of moss and upland, and its expansive natural solitudes, rendered it a most fitting asylum for those persecuted and driven ones. It had its share in the visitations of the dragoons as well during the killing times; and the poet also came in due time upon the scene and memorialised the slain in that rhythm that remains to witness for the confessors in face of the suns and in spite of the storms and the frosts of more than two and a quarter centuries. Close by the upland village of Barrhill—a pleasant village, if lonely, and

blown upon of the breezes that wander over the moors and mosses — "lie John Murchie and Daniel M'Ilwrick, 1688." These were young men. It is not known what their specific offending was, but it is surmised that they fought either at Rullion Green or at Bothwell Brig; and when they were discovered at Alticannoch near New Luce, Bibles were found on them, and that was proof positive to the persecutors on whose side they were. They were summarily "murdered" where they were found, and two women came by night and had their remains removed to the spot where they still rest, and where they are thus memorialised:—

"Here in this place two martyrs lie,
Whose blood to heaven hath a loud cry,
Murdered contrary to divine laws
For owning of Christ Jesus' Cause.
By bloody Drummond they were shot
Without any trial near this spot."

In Colmonell Churchyard lies a Covenanting worthy, with the following lines inscribed on his tombstone:—

"I, Matthew M'Ilwrick, in the parish of Colmonell,
By bloody Claverhouse I fell,
Who did command that I should die
For owning Covenanted Presbytery.
My blood a witness still doth stand,
'Gainst all defections in this land."

Matthew, who is supposed also to have been out on the Pentlands, or at Bothwell Brig, that day the Covenanters were scattered by Monmouth, was found close by the farm-house of Barbour, about a mile and a half below the village. He did his best to escape in the open country, but was pursued on foot by four of the dragoons. One of them he killed, and then he was shot. A night and a day he lay in his blood, and then two girls in their teens lifted his corpse in the friendly gloom of the following night and carried him to the churchyard. They dug a shallow grave, and, using a grey plaid for a shroud, they buried him there. Long years afterwards a joiner in Glenluce uncovered the tomb and looked upon the bones of the martyr, still encompassed by the grey plaid of one of the brave girls who had seen to his interment.

In Straiton Churchyard there is another example of the Covenanting poet, over the grave of "Thomas M'Haffie, martyr, 1686." This man was sought and found by a Captain Bruce, almost sick unto death in his father's house at Largs, close to the village. He made a vain effort to escape. Unable to stand, the soldiers set him down on a whinstone boulder and plied him with the usual compromising questions, and, his answers being unsatisfactory to them, they shot him dead. The poetry runs thus :—

"Though I was sick and like to die,
Yet Bloody Bruce did murder me,
Because I adhered in my station
To Scotland's Covenanted Reformation.
My blood for vengeance yet doth call
Upon Zion's haters all."

So much for Reformation poetry of the Memorial order in Ayrshire. It cannot very well be urged that it is, in any one instance, of an high order. But it has certain virtues in combination that are almost peculiar to itself. It does not beat about the bush; when the poet is going to say a thing, he says it right out. The men who made it had no earthly doubt as to their position religiously; they, and they only, were right, and all the rest, the world that did not think with them, were wrong. It was well with all the martyrs; with those who had persecuted them, or been instrumental in bringing about their destruction, there was but the gall of bitterness and the ceaseless bond of iniquity; and for them from of old Tophet had been ordained. The rhythm is halting, the rhythm is uneven, the language is often crude; but whatever may be its defects, the poetry is from the heart—wrung from the heart by a sense of the horrors inflicted on their friends in the killing times. It is no good to fight oppression with Christian charity.

There is a time and a place for everything, and surely this churchyard and hillside verse, with all

its crudities and its outbreathings of slaughter and of vengeance, is more in keeping with the period at which it was written, and the feelings that inspired it, than if it had overflowed with a charitable sentimentality that did not really obtain. No more than are the Covenanters themselves, is the poetry to be judged as if it had been penned in the piping times of peace. The age made men, and it made poetry, and there we may leave it. For they must all go together in the summing up.

But before we leave the poetry memorial of the Covenanters, I annex these four verses from Mr. Lawson's "Covenanters of Ayrshire." They are memorial of a nameless Ayrshire man who, wounded at Rullion Green, died on his way back to his native county, on the uplands on the eastern border of Lanarkshire. His last request was that they should bury him in sight of the Ayrshire hills. The day following his death they carried him to an upland spot, where, through an opening in the hills, they could see the hills above Muirkirk, and there they laid him. And thus, poetically, Mr. Lawson puts his stone on this martyr's cairn :—

"Bury me in sight of the Ayrshire hills,
Which my feet have so often trod,
Where I learned to pray at my mother's knee,
And worship my father's God.

Bury me in sight of the Ayrshire hills,
That look on the western sea,
Where all I love are living now,
And all that once loved me.

Bury me in sight of the Ayrshire hills,
Though there I'll never roam,
But I like to think that my body will rest
In view of my native home.

Bury me in sight of the Ayrshire hills,
Though far from them I die,
That haply some kindred eye may look
On the sod 'neath which I lie."

To the Lawsonian measure another Ayrshire Covenanting bard has taken leave to add the lines :—

"Bury me in sight of the Ayrshire hills,
And when I burst the sod,
I shall steal a glimpse at the dear old scene,
As I rise to my father's God."

AYR IN THE DAWN OF HER HISTORY

Not seldom do I live in the Ayr that once was, the Ayr of long ago; the Ayr that was when the thick darkness brooded o'er the face of the historical deep, and ere yet the spirit of the recorder was moving upon the face of the waters; in the Ayr that can only be revisited in the glimpses of the night and of silent reverie, when one can roam backwards and afar across the limitless fields of Time and see with the eyes of the soul and of imagination those persons, those things, those times, that have already been.

The ancient burgh town sleeps. Beneath the stars and the dark deep sky the ocean rolls its waves, sometimes its white-tipped billows, up on the beach. Across the Firth the peaks of Arran are solemn in the gloom, and brown Carrick—rounded Carrick and sometimes green Carrick—is fast asleep against the southern sky. That ancient river, the river Ayr, is patiently pursuing its way to the harbour bar, ere plunging to the depths where Neptune reigns. And on either hand of

the town there stretch the long yellow sands of the coast.

These—the stars and the sky, the ocean and the river, the mountains and the little hill, the bar and the long yellow sands—were there ages before man first wandered hither, ages before the fathers first sought the shores of Clyde, and, finding a place fit for habitation, a place of forest and food, of river and sea, with their teeming store of fish, a place where Nature offered comparative safety and protection, declared: "This is our rest; here will we dwell, for we have desired it." Here in the night and in the twilight of history they dwelt while the centuries rolled on. It is but glimpses of them that we can catch amid the gloom, and if they are to be recalled from their place of forgetfulness, one must lay aside every weight and the clinging to sense that most easily besets him, and hark back in imagination to these far-off times when primitive history was being made, and when men and women of like passions with ourselves, the same in love and in hate, in war and in peace, in ambition and rivalry, began to lay the foundations of history, and to make straighter in these deserts an highway for the generations that were to follow after.

To the most of us, these far-away people are a myth, a shadowy host with which, with whom, we have nothing to do. We fail to realise that we

are largely what they made us, that we are in the strictest and best sense their fellow-townsmen and townswomen, that they were our sires, our fathers and mothers, only many times removed, and that the heritage which we are passing on is the very same heritage which they bequeathed to us. Do we love freedom so that we should gladly die for it? It is because they fought for it, because whole generations of them died for it, because, dying, they passed on the love of it to us. Do we cling to home and land and associations, and are we ready to affirm before all the world that there is no land like our own? It is because the fathers long stood in the gate for the country that was dear to them, and made it a land worth loving. Of a truth, we are very near the fathers, much nearer than most of us ever think. We are but what they were over again; and although change, advance, and progress are the order of the day, and of every day, the human nature remains what and where it was. Trains and telegraphs, electric developments, telephones and phonographs, science in every direction, striding along in seven-leagued boots—the whole apparent environment of life changed—these are no more than the fruits of the spirit that we possess in respect of the heredity that has been passed on to us from the far-back men and women, who, by the grace of God, were what they were, and what we should

in all probability be to-morrow were we, by some occult wave of the hand of a magician, transported to an environment similar to theirs. It is a simple truth that we are only marching in that long High Street procession, and that one day we shall drop out of it as others have done, to give place to those that are behind. These are not far away ; you can almost hear them as they come. As the fathers were, so are we ; as we are, so shall these be.

There is no handiwork of man remaining in Ayr to-day that can tell the story of these far-away times. The Auld Brig, undergoing, while this volume is in the Press, a process of restoration that cannot do otherwise than cut deep into its originality, bespans centuries as well as the river, but the town was here long ere its graceful arches threw their shadow in the water beneath, long ere its stout piers offered themselves to the spates of the a'-day rains or to the crashing ice seawards bound and to annihilation. The square tower of St. John's was part of a church that was here when the thirteenth century opened, but, if there be stones and stores of the twilight morn of the burgh town thereabouts, these are to be sought deep down in the sands. And, if neither kirk tower nor brig can tell the story, nothing else born of man can. The river could, if only it cared to speak ; the river of the long, troubled, broken

journey; that has wended its way by moors and mosses, where the peesweeps are crying round the graves of the martyrs; by scenes that once in their day witnessed fights and frays and forays; by caves where dwelt men of whom the world was not worthy, whose weariness was stilled to rest by the ever-present lullaby of its song; by keeps and castles that once were scenes and places of life, but that are now ruined, deserted, moss-grown, silent, solemn; by castles and houses that are now, but which shall pass, while the river shall go on without variableness or the shadow of turning; by wooded banks, by crags and haughs and ivy green; by busy mills, where the wheels turn and the machinery roars; by youth and age, by life and death, doing its appointed work through the appointed centuries, and bearing all the time to the same sea the tribute of the valleys that run among the hills.

If only the river cared to speak! The river is part of Ayr, and no inconsiderable part of it. To me it is a personality. Unstable as water! That may be, for it is written, but the river was there ages before the first wanderers launched their coracles upon its surface, and it will be there when Ayr writes Finis to its life-story, and may be long after the story has been wound up; and as I stand by its banks, when the rains are out on

the hills beyond Muirkirk, and watch its turbid waters jumping the dykes, and the moon glinting on the tawny race of the spate that goes down to the sea by way of the piers and arches of the bridges, and the black-backed town on either hand, I feel as if the days were not quite gone when rivers were instinct with life, when they had their sprites and their water-kelpies to infuse them with something of a conscious individuality.

I stand still to watch the Ayr, brown with the tribute of the hills, go by. "Oh, river," I say to it, "have you no guardian spirit, no conscious intelligence that can tell your story as you would have it told?" And out of the spate, from amid the roaring of the many waters, and sighing and soughing as the wind among the trees, comes a voice. I hear it, for I have ears to hear:

"That story I may not tell, as it will have to be told, until the Great Day of the telling. Whence came I? Ask of the irrecoverable past, ere yet the channels of the waters were seen, and when the morning stars were singing for joy that they were made. Creature I of the cloudland and the hill-top, where the vapours rest; of the woodland and the valley, where the rains distil; of the moors and the mosses, where the wild birds are crying to their mates. Begotten of the sun and of the sea, from the depths of the ocean I have come, and to the depths of the ocean I am going.

By many a path and many a fell, by rocky bed, by the drooping lands of the loneliness and the solitude, I haste me by the crags and the depths, by the narrows and the plains, by shingly pool and gravelly bottom and weedy bed, and gathering in my children as I go, I hie me back to the caverns of the great deep.

"How old am I? Ere man was, I am. I number not my years by centuries; a thousand years are to me but a day. Far away, in a time so hoar that it touched the verge of the eternity that is past, I cut my path from mountain-top to sea. Many a generation of giant birds have stalked solemn and lone in my waters; they came, they lived, they died, they are not. Great beasts and scaly reptiles I have seen across the path of years that were numbered by the thousand; and they too have vanished as the morning cloud, as the early dew, as the snows of the mountains. And what of primal man? Ah, he was but a creature of yesterday to me, but I recall him as first he came, gaunt, savage, wild, wandering through the glades. Out of the bogs, out of the fens, from the forest and the mountain, from the place of the far-away that I know not, he reached my banks, to stay by them, to drink of my waters, and in his low, rude hut to dwell. How slowly for him the rolling centuries went by! With the wild beasts of the deep treeland

he fought; with men that were wilder far than they. The sun was his god, to the pale moon he bowed the knee, and he read his destiny in the stars. Ever and ever, upward and onward he pressed, and hard was the war he waged, but the spirit of the holy gods was in him, and it was for him the world had been made. The thunders of heaven could not appal him; the rushing of the lightning bolt affrighted him no more than the passing of the javelin. Weary and devious was the path he trod. By many a terror it wound, by death and by many a smoking altar, but the days grew fairer and the skies brighter, and man came to his own, and to the destiny whereunto he had been called.

"Have not I heard the voices, long ago stilled and for ever, of the Druid fathers when as yet they cried aloud in the ears of the Sun God, and their altars were reeking with the blood of the slain? Have not my streams been reddened with the blood of the ancient Caledonians, when with club and stone axe they fought to the death for the good land, the land of the rivers and the seashores? Was not I by when there came from the southland the mail-clad men of another race to win the valleys, the mountains, and the fruitful fields for their own; and have not I borne their dead, gashed and gory, to the all-receiving depths of the ocean? Stern men, stout of heart

and undaunted, how my childern fought them in the gates! How they stood, each with his slaughter weapon in his hand, until the stranger girded up his loins and fled, and the stars shone upon the homes bought anew with a great price, the price of blood!

"Ah, the story is long to tell, and tarry I may not, for even now I hear the leaping of the waves of the sea and the moaning of the bar, where river and ocean meet. Whither am I going? Out into the deep, whither thou thyself art so soon to follow; the deep that awaits all things, and that gives them back in the fulness of time to begin their course anew. And what shall be the end of these things? That is for those who shall be there to see. I have touched the verge of the distant ages that linked themselves with the eternity that is past, and on and on my course I shall run until I have completed my journey. And then—"

Here there is a sighing down the turbid waters that are tumbling on towards the piers and the sea, the voice of the river is hushed, and the river itself is holding on its way as aforetime.

To demonstrate that Ayr was here long ere its reliable history began is not on, the whole, a very difficult undertaking. Ayr has no specific, written, recorded story of her own further back

than the very end of the twelfth century or the very beginning of the thirteenth, when William the Lyon had a "new castle" on the river-side, wherein he signed the charter of the burghal regality. A new castle presupposes an old one; a residence of the King presupposes that it was no inconsiderable place wherein he had his habitation; and the granting of a royal charter is proof positive that the town was already worthy to receive one. It is a well-established fact that the Church of St. John's was at that period a fane of great consequence, and that the head of the important religious establishment which it represented played a prominent part even in other than ecclesiastical affairs.

When first the Caledonian tribesmen came wandering hither, the comparatively narrow piece of land between the estuaries of the Ayr, the clear river, and the Doon, the dusky or dun river, cannot have failed to appear to them as an exceptionally fitting spot whereon to set up their huts. To-day there are two miles between the mouths of the rivers; then there was less than one. In front was the sea. There was thus both fishing ground and natural protection on either hand, as well as seawards, and in the event of an enemy disputing the settlement, the settlers had assured themselves in a comparatively easy task to defend their home. Whatever the

times were, we may conclude they were troublous times. Great forests covered the lowlands, and in their depths roamed wandering bands of warriors, to whom might and right were interchangeable terms. No doubt when the first Ayrians encamped by the waters, one of the first things they did was in some fashion to try to ensure themselves against attack, and, in all probability, on some rising ground, above the river Ayr, some site created by the drifting sands and the efforts of the bent grass to capture and hold for the land the tribute of the seashore, they erected something equivalent to a block-house, to the shelter of whose walls they might repair in special days of stress and storm. Who these first-comers were it would be rash to attempt to say. It seems fairly safe to conclude, however, that they were Celts, and the balance of opinion among investigators into that dim period of Scottish story favours the contention that they were Picts rather than Scots. Both, however, were of the same Celtic race, and perhaps, save from the archæological point of view, it is not a matter of much consequence who they were, or whence they came.

Sufficient, they did come wandering hither; between the rivers they started the settlement of Ayr, which no doubt consisted of a few huts built on the sandy knowes above the river; the

forests supplied them with building material and firewood, the rivers and the sea gave them fish, in the woodland roamed the red deer and the dun; on the grassy banks of the stream they pastured their flocks of little sheep; they fished, they hunted, they made stone axes, spear heads, arrow tips; they ground their corn in the querns by labour of hand; they decorated their women with rude ornaments of the chase and with the spoils of war; and under the tribal system they lived and wrought, an organised and regulated community. They were not the rude, painted savages that so many people take them to have been, but part of a pioneering, enterprising people, who were able to band themselves together in such a fashion as to oppose a stern and continued resistance to the Roman legions, who never allowed themselves to be assimilated of the Romans, or weakened or enfeebled by their occupation, and who were able, after the empire that had its seat on the banks of the Tiber had begun to wane, and had called in its sons from the east and west alike to the defence of the citadel, to reassert themselves in such a way as to result in the formation of the Kingdom of Alcluyd, and in the laying of the foundations on which, later, the Kingdom of Scotland was built. They were strenuous men, enduring and patriotic; essentially

patriotic pioneers, as Scotsmen remain to this day.

When Christianity first began to move among these early Celts cannot definitely be said. It was in Scotland, a pioneering mission, when the Romans were here. The fourth century had not run its course ere St. Ninian was wandering, staff in hand, among the Picts of Galloway, a district that had the river Doon for its northern boundary; and the fact that churches were even then built for the promulgation of the Christian faith, is of itself reasonable proof that the earlier worship, of which the Druids were the exponents, was already giving way to the purer inspiration of the Man of Galilee, and that the number of the converts was not few. And this was nigh a century and a half ere Columba had established himself in Iona, amid the solitudes of the western seas.

However, there are no remains of the earlier Pictish period within, or immediately adjacent to, the town of Ayr; and we are compelled to deduce the fact of the presence of the Picts from the unmistakable evidences that exist of the necessity there was for the Romans occupying Ayrshire in considerable force. Here we are on much firmer and surer ground, for that remarkable people have left unmistakable traces behind them of the thoroughness with which

they colonised, and of the high pitch in civilisation to which they had attained, in the remains of their villas on the shores of Clyde in North Ayrshire, in the vessels and pitchers found at Dalrymple, in the trenches of the Parkmoor encampment, in sepulchral urns found near the Fail monastery at Tarbolton, in the camps of Loudoun and Dundonald, in occasional remains given up by the earth in Maybole, and in the evidences once forthcoming, in and near Ayr itself, of battles fought in other days, and of the presence of a race of people who had attained to a comparatively high standard in the arts of peace.

The author of the "New Statistical Account of Ayr," compiled in 1837, the Rev. Alexander Cuthill, one of the ministers of the parish, was of opinion that Ayr must have been a Roman station of considerable consequence. "There are," he writes, "manifest indications that the whole of the lower part along the sea coast from river to river had been the scene of some great struggle in which the Romans and the natives of the island were combatants, and that probably in more than one conflict. Throughout the whole of this space, Roman and British places of sepulchre are found, with Roman armour, swords, lances, daggers, and pieces of mail, and brazen camp vessels, intermixed with

British urns of rude baked clay, hatchet and arrow heads, and other implements of warfare used by the Caledonians. One of the largest and most beautiful of these urns was found some years ago, near the banks of the Doon, among a collection of ancient bones 'beneath the cairn, whaur hunters fand the murdered bairn.' We," adds the reverend gentleman, "have seen a very antique Tuscan-shaped pitcher, in possession of a gentleman in Ayr, that was found many years ago, on the top of the rock in the Townhead quarry, 30 or 40 feet under the present surface of the ground, along with a kettle that has since been lost." According to Spottiswoode, "in the year 360, Maximus, a Roman Prefect, excited the Picts to enter into an alliance with him against the Scots, and the Romans and Picts encountered the Scots at the Water of Doon in Carrick. The Scots were routed, and their King, Eugenius, and most of his nobility were slain." It is but a glimpse into a far-back story that is thus afforded us, but we may well believe what a day of excitement it was in Ayr when the rival armies engaged in a life-and-death struggle in the vicinity of the town, and when the Scots, who had in all probability marched hither from Argyll, where at that period they had their seat and centre, were, in spite of the gallant fight made by their King and his

nobles, defeated with great slaughter. The sympathies of the Ayrians would naturally be with the allied forces of the Romans and Picts, and while possibly the little settlement between the rivers might have to bewail, as it has had to do not seldom since then, the loss of warriors who had gone forth to fight for hearth and home, but never to return, the shoutings for the victory would prevail over the voices of them who wept. Deep down below what is now the level of the streets there are built drains that have been described as Roman water-gates. These are about 4 ft. high by $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in breadth. One was laid bare early last century when excavations were being made in Sandgate Street, and another some time in the Fifties, or early in the Sixties, of the same century, was uncovered when the workmen were digging with a view to laying the foundation of a new house in Newmarket Street. In all probability, if the surface on which modern Ayr stands to-day were bared to the depth of 18 or 20 ft. many remains of early days would be brought to light. The blowing sands have covered them up, and foundations and causeways of a later date; and it is in vain to hope that they ever shall be bared once again to the light of the sun. What has been seen, however, taken in connection with the relics and the traditions of the battlefield, with the upturned

arms and armour and urns, and with the unmistakably genuine remains of the Roman occupation of these parts in the country adjacent, leaves little room to doubt that Ayr not only knew the Romans well, but was a place of no inconsiderable consequence during the Roman period.

When the Romans had gone, the Picts resumed the reins of government, by themselves at first, and afterwards in alliance, indeed in racial conjunction, with the Scots. Columba came to Iona, he and his followers from Ireland, and instituted that mission that was destined to prove such a blessing to Scotland generally. The place-names of Ayrshire demonstrate what a strong hold Christianity, in the person of these ancient fathers, had in this part of the realm. On the banks of the Stinchar in southern Carrick some wandering saint had his cell or chapel, and in Col—monell—Col being equivalent to Cell—his memorial endures to this day. There was a church on a little loch three miles or so to the north of Girvan, and they called it Kil—or Kirk—Lochan. That holy man Oswald, the Northumbrian father, had a kirk named to his honour, and the village of Kirkoswald is the proof of it. Kilkerran is there to speak for itself, so too is Kirkmichael; in fact, a thousand years ago and more, Carrick was beyond any doubt an extremely churchy place. So was the

rest of the shire. If Kyle was less "saintly" in nomenclature than her southern sister it was not that she was less Christian, and in Cunningham there was—and there are—Kilbirnie, Kilmarnock, Kilmaurs, Kilwinning, and (West) Kilbride to recall the more conspicuous of the holy men that wandered hither to live, to labour, to leaven the countryside with their piety, and to leave behind them the good name that is rather to be chosen than great riches.

Here, again, so far as Ayr is concerned, we are left almost entirely to conjecture. We have seen that at the end of the twelfth century Ayr was a place of great ecclesiastical consequence, and we know beyond any doubt that the Church of St. John's was out of all sight the best religious fane that the town has ever known. But history is strangely silent on the subject. Ten or twelve years ago it seemed good to the Ayrshire and Wigtownshire Archæological Society to try to trace the foundations of the Church of St. John's. In front, and all around the square tower, the dead were found thickly clustered together, body upon body, uncoffined, the skeletons complete, each in its place waiting the sound of the last trumpet and the breathing of the spirit upon them that their bones may live, and that they may stand in their lot at the end of the days. The foundations of the Church were found, the length

thereof and the breadth thereof; and deep down beneath the foundations were other skeletons of men and women and children of Ayr of centuries long back. It is inconceivable that they should have been buried beneath the foundation-walls already existing, and the inference otherwise is that they were there before the foundations were laid, and that they were the dead of a smaller church that stood within the same God's Acre prior to the building of that Church of St. John's that Oliver Cromwell turned into an armoury. Thus with the help of the dead Ayrians the centuries are abridged, and we are able to realise that the town is well-named Auld Ayr, the mother of many generations.

And when That Day shall come, what of the rising? And what of the continuity of the citizenship?

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW UPON THE FEUDAL DAYS

It is necessarily an extremely difficult thing to live, even in imagination, in days that are not our own. Whatever may have been the tendency in ancient times to say that the former days were better than these, it may be questioned whether the most of us ever succeed in shaking off the firm belief of our early years that there never were, and that there never can be again, such times as our own; and if we try to call up, as in a picture, the scenes, the associations, the social customs, the people, that have centuries back finished their course, the point of view from which we look at them is that of our own environment. We feel it hard to understand how men could really be happy when the blood feud ran, when there was endless broil and contention in the high places of the field, when the common people were at the beck and call of the aristocracy, when the Church of Rome was paramount in the religious life of the land, when superstition was rife, when the people outside the towns had few, if any, rights, when the law of the

land was not supreme, when man-slaying in the open field was not regarded as a crime, when the means of locomotion were of the crudest and rudest description, when the soil was marshy, undrained, fruitful of agues and fevers, when the eating of butcher-meat was a comparative rarity, even to the middle classes, and when ignorance of letters was the order of the day. To us these conditions appear to savour of the semi-barbaric, and we should probably find them to be so if we could be suddenly projected into them; and yet there is no real reason to doubt that the fore-fathers, say, of four centuries back, enjoyed life in their own way quite as much as we do in ours. Men and women can acclimatise themselves to almost anything; and, if we try to walk back across these four centuries, and have a look at the Ayrshire of the period when Mass was still being said or sung in the pre-Reformation churches, when the bells were still ringing in the abbey or monastery towers, and when the castles, that are now for the most part ruinous, were instinct with life, we may be able to realise that the times were not so fruitless of pleasure as we are inclined to think they must have been.

Carrick is a bailiary, and the bailie is the Earl of Cassillis. The great Kennedy family is unbroken, and from the Doon to the furthest bounds of Glen-app, no man can dare to ride or bide unless he court

with Kennedy. There are other families within the bounds, but the greater part of these are, in one way or another, "sib" to the dominant clan, and, where they are not, they are not of sufficient consequence to assert their individuality obnoxiously in antagonism to that of the chief. There are troubles coming in the fulness of time upon the feudal solidarity, but it is time enough to reckon with these when they shall have arrived; and the day when we start out upon our peregrinations in Carrick is the heyday of the might of Cassillis. There is but the one bridge bespanning the water of Doon, and that is the high-backed bridge that is destined one day to be immortal because its magic keystone arrested the hellish chase hard on the heels of the flying farmer from Kirkoswald. It is not far, as the river runs, or as the crow flies, to the sea, and with the ever same fresh westerly wind in our faces that has been blowing in on the same shore since the days when the morning stars were in song, we hold our way to where, seated on its rock, Greenan Castle looks out to the sea. It is not a big house this, but its position makes it strong. There is only one side of it that an enemy can hope to reach, and that is defended by heavy walls and sheltering bulwarks; and the Kennedy within feels safe at night when the gate is locked and the world is without. It is a

lonely place this for a residence. But what of that? It is a home. Across the bay is Ayr, within easy reach, and the Greenan family can have chirurgeon, or leech, or scrivener any time they want him, and the laird is within hail of the royal burgh should his master's cause call for him there.

Southwards, pursuing the winding shore, an hour and a half of walking brings Dunure Castle into view. An ancient house this, numbering its years by the hundred; a house that gave shelter to the Kennedy hopes and fortunes when as yet they were young, that was there when the Norsemen had not yielded up the struggle for the Scottish westland, and that is still strongly held, and familiar with State function and even with royal visit. It dominates the coast for miles, and many a league of the land of Carrick. It is a busy place Dunure, strong of wall, spacious of accommodation, built for troublous times and centuries to come; and, when the times are quiet and peaceable, its domestic life is happy. Children are born to it; it welcomes the huntsman at close of day; youths and maidens court under its shadow on the beach where the waves break; the ladies sit in their chambers high up over the sea and watch the suns setting and the ships passing to and fro; and as we pass it the warder hails us whence and whither, and

bids us pursue our way in peace. So we hold on a few miles to where Culzean's square tower sits on its own rock, square, strong, formidable. Its gardens are pretty, its orchards are well-stocked, and they are so well sheltered that its fruits and flowers are the earliest of all the houses in Carrick. Turnberry is not far removed, but already it is ruinous, untenanted, and bare, and passing underneath its walls, we continue southward till we reach the towers of Ardmillan. It is "built round, court ways," protected by a broad, deep ditch, and the bridge that gives access can be swung round, so that no stranger may enter without being bidden. Around it there are corn-fields waving to the winds, and meadows that are rich in pasturage, and the laird boasts of his fruit, and particularly of "the early pear of Ardmillan" which, he tells us, is reputed in that it hath "a pleasant taste." Neighbours to Ardmillan are the Cathcarts of Carleton, and there are eerie stories abounding here of a laird much given to matrimony and prone to the destruction of his spouses; and we learn with a certain grim pleasure that vengeance befell him at the hands of May of Collean, who pushed him over the high crag into the sea, and so ended the cantrips of this Blue Beard of the west. By Ballantrae stands Ardstinchar, the most southerly of the Kennedys' strongholds on the

Carrick coast, "a huge, vast fabric," that looks up the Stinchar valley, and out to sea, and that can give to the chief on occasion a strong force of men-at-arms to do his bidding upon the warders of the Kyle marches, or to raid as far upon Loudoun as the seat of the Campbells itself.

The great houses on Doon are not many. But here is Cassillis, the headquarters of the King of Carrick, the seat of a succession of Earls who brook no interference with their lordship, with its "fine stone stair turning about a hollow casement," and so constructed that the lamp at the top gives light all the way up, its cruives for the taking of salmon, its ponds to furnish the household with other fish, and its gardens with their good store of apricots, peaches, cherries, "and all other fruits and herbage which the kingdom produces." Here, too, are Auchendrane, fertile of gardens and corn-fields; Blairston, low-lying on the water-side, a stone "tower-house," with lower buildings about it; and Bridgend, "a pretty dwelling" of its kind, and having the unspeakable advantage of being built close to the bridge of Doon and within easy reach of the town of Ayr.

The valley of the Girvan is rich in castles and in mansions. Finely built and of "huge bulk" is Blairquhan, well provided with timber and surrounded with extensive orchards. Cloncaird,

coming next, has its gardens and orchards and great store of wood; and Kirkmichael, pretty and commodious, is "as desirable a dwelling as there is in all the countryside," with its well-enclosed loch and its drained fields and its good corn-land. Dalduff is not large, but it has also its orchards and its cultivated fields; Kilkerran is deep set in the woodland; Drummurchie is small, "but a most lovely thing," rich in its accommodations, built "not for ostentation, but for conveniency," stocked with all manner of fowl, wild and tame, with wauk-mill and corn-mill, and all manner of tradesmen at hand; Dalquharran is stately, "the best house of all that country," famed for its oak trees and the richness of its forests; Bargany, mightily commodious, is a "huge, great, lofty tower," in the centre of a quadrangular court, with three corner towers, each four storeys in height; Killochan, among its orchards, looks down upon "the prospect of a pleasant plain"; and, after that, Pinkill and Trochreg, the Kirk of Girvan, and the Tower of Ballochtoul, "a monument of the builder's folly, being raised five storeys high, without staircase, and no more but one room to each storey."

Nor are these all, or nearly all, the great houses of Carrick, for the valley of the Stinchar is dotted with keeps and towers and mansions;

Alton Albany, Doularg, Auchinsoul, Bennan, Minuntion, Corseclay, Daljarrock, Pinwherry, Kildonnan, the Craig, Dalreoch, Bardrochat, Craigneil, Kirkhill, Knockdolian; and the last-named of these "surprises the beholder with things far beyond expectation in a country so wild and mountainous." And besides these, and apart from coast or from river valley, are many more. Carrick is indeed a bailiary rich in its castles and homes; and if there be stormy life and bloody strife, there is many a social function, with love and friendship and gaiety; and the lords and barons and knights and lairds can forget their Ayrshire jealousies and warrings, and can stand together in common cause, even as their successors will do hundreds of years after the keeps have been deserted, and the ivy has grown up on the walls, and the winds of heaven are whistling eerily amid and around the battlements.

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That is one side—the social side—of Ayrshire life in these so-called good old days. But there is another and a sterner side to it, and its retrospect is far from so pleasant.

When John Welsh came to Ayr, within a year or two of the century's close, the place was a pandemonium; so much so, that it was hardly safe for a certain class of people to walk the

streets unarmed or unattended. Rival families of Kyle and Carrick had their town-houses on the High Street, or in the courts and closes adjoining. Their retainers were within hail, and very often what is called nowadays "spoiling for a fight"; and bloody encounters were so common that John Welsh, man of peace and all as he was, wore a steel bonnet on his head, so that he might be able, with the less scathe, to rush in between the warring factions.

Not many years before that, Gilbert, the Earl of Cassillis, the great "King of Carrick," had roasted the Commendator of Crossraguel in the black vault of Dunure, to extract certain deeds from him, so that he might thereby take possession of the rights and the heritages that the Commendator had legally obtained from his sovereign. An Earl of Cassillis had been slain by a party of rival feudalists among the sandhills to the north of Prestwick; an Earl of Eglinton had been butchered one summer day by the Cunninghames at the ford of the Annick, near Stewarton; the Knight of Culzean had been hacked to death in the most brutal fashion by the partisans of another and a rival branch of the great Kennedy family, as he was riding on his way from Greenan Castle to Edinburgh; the Master of Stair had been taken captive by Cassillis, and, after a brief and summary assize,

had been hanged, the evening of the same day, from the yett of Craigneil; Kennedy of Bargany had been fatally wounded in a winter day's encounter on his road from Ayr to his home on the Girvan Water, and had been carried back to die in Ayr, and to give place to his brother Thomas, whose very soubriquet, "The Wolf of Dinmurchie," is indicative of the ferocity of his character; the Montgomeries of Eglinton had ridden, like a destroying angel, over the lands of the Cunninghames in North Ayrshire, and in fire and rapine and slaughter, had left the place a blackened desolation; the great tower of the Montgomeries, Eglinton Castle itself, had been burned to the ground by the reprising adherents of Glencairn; Kerelaw Castle had been swept of the flames kindled by the Montgomeries, and its bare, blackened walls were raising to the winds their witness of the conflagration; Cunninghame of Clonbeith had been dragged from a chimney in which he was concealed, and, because of the deed he had helped to do by the waters of Annick, had been cut in pieces; Cunninghame of Montgreenan, the Commendator of Kilwinning, had been shot dead at his own gate for no other reason than that he was of the house and lineage of Glencairn; Sir Robert Boyd, the lord of Kilmarnock, had led out his men from the Dean Castle and had slain Sir Alan Stewart of Darnley

between Falkirk and Linlithgow, and in return he had himself been waylaid and killed by the Stewarts, and his body borne, cold and stiff, within the walls of the strong keep that he had left but a few hours before full of life and courage, and keen for the process of events; and there was in course of evolution the Auchendrane tragedy, that had already cost lives, and that was destined to eventuate in the execution of the Mures, father and son, on the scaffold in Edinburgh, at the hands of the public executioner.

It may be questioned whether any county of Scotland could match such a cluster of atrocities within such a comparatively brief period of time, and these are but the outstanding incidents of what may almost be called Reformation Times in Ayrshire. There were many conflicts and many killings besides these. Of the yeomen, the men-at-arms, the peasants who fell in the feudal strife, no record has been kept, but it is historical that many lives were lost in these warrings of the gentry; in the prosecution of quarrels with which the common people had, as usual, very little to do.

Whatever may have been the general and the further-reaching effects of the Reformation, it cannot well be urged that it was an immediate promoter of peace, or that it wrought any great

change on the morals of its own generation. The nobles and their adherents in many cases took different sides; and among the Protestant nobles and gentry there was much squabbling, and a good deal of bad feeling over the ownership of the lands that had belonged to the Church. They wanted to be remunerated for their fidelity to the cause of the Reformation; and indeed there is very little reason to doubt that a considerable measure of the reforming zeal of many of them was in the proportion of what they expected to be able to make out of it. Social customs are not easily changed. A transference of faith, even when it amounts to a revolution, does not, with the great mass of the people, mean anything like a permanently "new birth." What they are, they remain, as a rule; and although in this particular case they adapted themselves without any great difficulty to the reformed creed, and were quite content to get rid of the Catholic hierarchy, great and small, they remained, none the less, easy-going, fond of fun and fighting, and quite as much creatures of their earlier environment as they were before. They were rigorous to slaying in the matter of witches. They branded and burned offenders against the legal code, and even for what would be regarded now as the most trivial of offences. But at the same time,

so easy-going were the Sunday morals of the worthy man who was John Welsh's predecessor in the parish of Ayr, and who continued his superior, that he used to follow up his forenoon prelection in St. John's with an adjournment to the archery butts, where he may even have been a crack shot with the bow and arrow. Obviously, what is called Sabbatarianism did not come in with the first Reformation; rather it seems to have been the product of the sterner Kirk that was itself the creature of the suffering, enduring persecution and conflict that were the preliminaries to the emergence from Prelacy, and that led the way to the dismissal of the Stuart race from the throne of the United Kingdom.

It has been said, and not without some good reason, that the Ayrshire feuds had very little that was redeeming about them. They were not begotten of high motives or impulses, neither were they in any way whatever patriotic or promoted for the public weal. The great North Ayrshire blood feud, that of the Montgomeries and the Cunninghames, was nothing more than a struggle for local ascendancy. The Cunninghames had enjoyed the bailiary of the division; the Montgomeries managed to get it through influence with the sovereign; and the blood feud broke out. And

anything more utterly prosaic or callously reprehensible than the murder of the young Earl of Eglinton, as he was crossing the Annick, it would be hard to conceive. He was on his way to see the King at Stirling. In passing, he had called in at Lainshaw for luncheon. The Montgomerie of Lainshaw had a Cunninghame wife. This lady had all the hatreds and prejudices of her family against the enemy, although she had wedded into the rival sept. Knowing that the Earl was coming to partake of the hospitality of Lainshaw, she summoned her brothers, and told them that now was their chance. When the Earl bade her and her husband good-bye, she went to an upper window and waved a tablecloth, to let her expectant kinsmen know that the hour for vengeance was at hand; and as the Earl and his friends were crossing the stream — rather, as they were emerging from the ford of the Annick—they fell upon them and butchered the lord of Montgomerie. Here there was an outrage on hosptality—treachery of the basest kind, and murder; and if the reprisal was bloody, it can be no occasion for surprise.

The Carrick feud was not less unlovely. The Knight of Culzean appears to have been a good man. His one fault that could not be condoned was that he was sib to Cassillis;

and it was for that he was cut down beside the chapel of St. Leonard. To screen themselves and to ensure that there should be no witness-bearing against them, the Mures of Auchendrane captured the one man who could directly associate them with the deed. They sent him to Arran, a virtual prisoner; he escaped and returned home to Ayr. They recaptured him, and compelled him to enlist as a soldier in the wars in Flanders; he survived the rigours and dangers of the campaign, and sought his home again. They strangled him on the Carrick shore, with the aid of one of their retainers; then they hired a man to kill this retainer, and another to remove their hired assassin. They stuck at nothing. Fortunately, their plans miscarried, and they were executed like the felons that they were.

And this grim, prosaic characteristic pervades the feudal story of Ayrshire. Beyond a doubt the first Reformation had its compensations in many ways; but it did not change, neither could it have been expected to have changed, the moral character of the people in respect to blood-letting. The Catholic feudalists of to-day remained the Protestant feudalists of the morrow; and the High Street of Ayr, and the King's highways throughout the shire, from north to south, were the constant scenes of strife and of bloodshed.

AYR IN THE DAYS OF THE SECOND REFORMATION

THE prominent part that Ayrshire was privileged to take in the eight-and-twenty years' struggle that was necessary to assert the cause of the second Reformation in Scotland, is known to every reader of Scottish history; but it is doubtful whether Ayr's own place in the struggle has ever been sufficiently particularised. It is not that the ancient burgh—ancient even then with her more than four hundred and fifty years of regality behind her—was specially prominent in the promotion of, and in witnessing for, the good cause; on the contrary, and largely because she was a seat of civil authority and also a place of military strength, she continued in no inconsiderable degree what the out-and-out men of the Covenant would have called Laodicean in her attitude to the national faith and the efforts that were being made to maintain it against the tyranny of Charles II. and his minion ecclesiastics and counsellors. But the importance of the town itself in the west of Scotland naturally brought the people into close touch with the ruling powers; their hand

was heavy, even to slaying, upon the community as a whole, and upon individual members of it; great were the efforts of the Prelatists to secure the burghal adherence to the prelatic order; many were the goings to and fro of the authorities commissioned to enforce the mandates of the sovereign and his advisers upon the Presbyterians; and here, as elsewhere, the scaffold claimed its victims to the sacred cause of freedom and to Scotland's claim of right to the assertion of the faith that she had wrested an hundred years before from the Church of Rome. And in these days, when the real issues of the Reformation struggle are either being forgotten, or else becoming obscured, it cannot be otherwise than historically desirable, and perhaps even beneficial, to recall the story of Ayr's own part in the nation's fight for freedom.

Charles II. had not long been "restored" ere he began to demonstrate his intent to coerce Scotland into Episcopacy. The Scots were slow to arouse to a sense of their danger. They had that ingrained affection for the Stuarts that centuries of mutual interdependence had stamped upon the national character, and they submitted to various inroads upon their independence without much tangible protest. The efforts of the King and his Councillors, lay and clerical, were most systematic. On the 13th of September,

1666, they sent a missive to the town of Ayr signifying that Provost Cunningham, who was obviously either on their side, or else a municipal Gallio who cared for none of these things, should be continued in office. This was a direct interference with the right of the Town Council to choose their own Provost, yet no serious protest appears to have been taken against it. Who this Provost Cunningham was there is no record to tell. His surname is one of the oldest surnames identified with the history and development of the county, and it is quite possible that he may have been of the family of which the Earl of Glencairn was the head. Be that as it may, he was re-elected Provost, as requested.

This interference with the rights of the municipality was but a small thing in itself; it was none the less a sample of the more serious interference with the rights of the Church of Scotland, then Presbyterian, and wholly unsympathetic with Episcopacy, save where there were those who were prepared to sacrifice their principles and give up their convictions at the bidding of their superiors. The King was driving in the Episcopal wedge, the Bishops were already in power, and everything was being done that short-sighted ingenuity could devise to compel the nation to be prelatic. It was already an offence to attend a conventicle, an open-air preaching, and those who

were persisting in so doing were being persecuted and punished in the country districts of Ayrshire and in Galloway. The oppression that driveth a wise man mad, and that compels also the lovers of freedom to assert themselves, even where necessary in the extreme event to slaying, had forced a band of Galloway protestors to take up arms; and in the belief that Ayrshire was ready to rise in defence of the Kirk and of liberty, these, with their forces augmented from other districts, marched to Ayr in the hope of securing reinforcements, sending out emissaries at the same time to other parts of the country with the same object in view. It was in November of the same year (1666) that these insurgents—more properly these somewhat hastily advised defenders of the faith—appeared in Ayr. The excitement their presence caused was necessarily intense. The magistrates made themselves scarce. A few of the enthusiasts joined the standard, but the large majority of the inhabitants, no doubt familiar with the military strength at the disposal of the Crown, and seeing how futile the rising must necessarily be, held aloof. In a brief account of what occurred, "by a minister present with the country army"—evidently William Leitch, settled after the Revolution first at Peebles, and latterly at Dumfries, where he died, May, 1722—it is narrated that, accompanied by a Major Learmont,

this minister "went with about fifty horse to the town of Ayr to take up quarters. The magistrates fled, but we, hearing where one of them was, obliged him to give billets for seven or eight hundred horse and foot. Here also," adds the writer, "worthy Mr. Hugh M'Kail turned sickly, but recovered." The stay of the insurgents in Ayr was very brief. The town was not long taxed to maintain the Covenanters; indeed, a considerable number of them never entered the town at all to remain overnight, but rendezvoused on the banks of the Doon. Evidently Ayr was a disappointment to them, for they lost no time unnecessarily in setting out for Ochiltree, on their way to more hopeful recruiting grounds. But these they never reached. Despite all their efforts, their numbers grew fewer and fewer. Notwithstanding much energetic preaching, and protestation on behalf of the faith, they became more and more dispirited; and finally, at Rullion Green, on the slope of the Pentlands, they went to pieces before the much superior fighting force under General Dalziel.

Dire vengeance had to be taken for the rising. It was needful, in the opinion of Archbishop Sharpe and his coadjutors, that a severe example should be made of the offenders. For if such things were to be allowed with impunity, where was it all to end? So to Ayr there came a

Royal Commission, with Rothes at their head, armed with full justiciary power. The Court—for such it really was—sat on 24th December, and twelve prisoners were hailed to the judgment seat. That was a memorable day in Ayr; and truly the judgment was set almost as soon as the books were opened. The prisoners were, as a matter of course, found guilty. That was on the Monday, and the execution was fixed for eight of them on the Thursday. The names of the eight were James Smith, Alexander M'Millan, James M'Millan, George M'Cartney, John Short, John Graham, James Muirhead, and Cornelius Anderson. The hangman of the town was unwilling to imbrue his hands in the blood of these men, and he got out of the way and could not be found. No other man in the town of any degree could be persuaded, on any terms, to do the hateful work, and the authorities were at their wits' end. In their dilemma it occurred to the Provost that perhaps one of the condemned men might possibly be persuaded to buy his own life by consenting to hang his comrades; and, with considerable difficulty, Cornelius Anderson was prevailed upon to be the finisher of the law. When the fatal Thursday came round, Anderson's heart began to fail him, and it was necessary to fortify his failing courage with copious libations of brandy. Thus, more than half drunk, he

hanged his fellows, to the execration of every reputable citizen.

But in the interval between the escaping of the regular Ayr hangman and the persuading of Cornelius Anderson, an interesting incident occurred. A messenger was sent to Irvine to bring down the hangman of that town, William Sutherland, "a man very much master of the Scriptures, and blameless and pious," to do the work of the persecutors. Sutherland refused to be coerced into doing what his conscience told was not right. "When he had been put in the stocks and endured all the hardships," Wodrow tells us that "Lieut.-General Drummond ordered him to be taken out and bound to a stake, and caused a file of musketeers present their pieces, assuring him that he was a dead man if he yielded not to hang the condemned persons. This moved him not. Then they covered his face, and after a little the soldiers were ordered to run in upon him with a shout and all the noise they could make. Thus they resolved to make him feel the fear of death, though he escaped the pain of it. And this was his martyrdom, which he underwent with a good deal of composure and resolution." Sutherland himself emitted a lengthy "declaration and examination," wherein he tells how he was forced to Ayr against his will, how a curate called White tried to persuade

him to put the Covenanters to death, because they had been guilty of the crime of witchcraft, and how a number of "cursed, blaspheming soldiers" came about him, threatened him, and told him "he would go to the devil with the rest of the country folk." He was further threatened with the torture of the boot, and with having a cruse of hot lead poured on his hands. But none of these things moved him, and in the end he was liberated from prison and sent home again, where he was congratulated by my Lord Eglinton in having had the courage to act as he had done.

When Hugh M'Kail, one of the saintliest of all the martyrs, was executed at Edinburgh (22nd December, 1666), one of the five men who suffered death along with him was Ralph Shields, a clothier of Ayr, who had apparently joined the insurgents when they were there before the battle of the Pentlands. Shields was an Englishman who had settled in Ayr with the object of carrying on business, and he had espoused the Covenanting cause enthusiastically. Before his execution in the Grassmarket he issued a testimony which was, in effect, a powerful defence of the Covenanting cause, for which he rejoiced that he was counted worthy to die. "I declare," he wrote, "I have such persuasion of the interest of religion reformed, and sworn unto in the

Covenant, that I dare venture not only to lay down my own life, but if every hair of my head were a man, they should all be put to venture for this cause. I would not have the world to stumble at the cause because of my death after this manner; for I rejoice greatly in it." In this spirit Ralph Shields faced the terrors of the scaffold.

After the rout of Rullion Green there was great depression in the Presbyterian ranks, and the Government, encouraged by the Archbishop, took steps to make their own position more secure and that of the Covenanters less endurable. They became more exacting in the matter of attendance upon the ministrations of the curates, and more rigorous in their dealing with Conventicles and those who preached at them or attended them, and in order to secure the adherence of the better classes they passed an Order that compelled those of the well-to-do who were not frequenters of Episcopal ordinances to give up their good horses to the State. This pleased the prelates, but it did not fill the churches. At the same time (March, 1667) they tried to disarm the west country altogether. Gentlemen might keep their swords—that was all—otherwise, all arms had to be given up. Later on in the same year (October), by which time the Archbishop thought he had taught the westland

sufficiently, an indemnity was granted to those who had been concerned in the rising of the preceding year, and a commission was granted to a number of country gentlemen to see the bonds duly executed and sworn to. Those who thus acted for the Sheriffdom of Ayr were the Master of Cochrane, Sir John Cochrane, Lord Stair, Mr. Hugh Montgomerie, Sheriff-Substitute of Renfrew, Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, Mr. John Cunningham, advocate; Mr. James Cunningham, Sheriff-Depute of Ayr; and Mr. William Cunningham, by this time the ex-Provost of Ayr. How or why this special friend of the Crown had been relieved of his chief magistracy it is impossible to say, but obviously it was not because he had developed any pronounced sympathy with the Covenanters.

In spite of all that could be done to stop the Conventicles, these still went on. The people could neither be persuaded nor coerced into attendance upon the ministry of the curates, and accordingly Lord Cochrane was instructed by the Archbishop of Glasgow to put the law in force within the area of his jurisdiction. The result was another Commission, that sat at Ayr in March, 1669, and that summoned to its bar several ministers that had been reported on as having acted contrary to law and preached and baptized irregularly. These were "Messrs.

William Fullarton, late minister of St. Quivox ; John Spaldin, at Dreghorn ; Alexander Blair, at Galston ; Hugh Archibald, at Evandale ; James Alexander, at Kilmalcolm ; Andrew Dalrymple, at Auchinleck ; John Hutchison, at Maybole ; James Vetch, at Mauchline ; Hugh Campbell, at Riccarton ; John Gamble, at Symington ; and John Wallace, at Largs." These worthy men repaired to Ayr to answer for their shortcomings. They answered the questions put to them with such meekness and candour that a majority of the Commission were for dismissing them forthwith, but that did not suit the purpose of the Archbishop, and his representative at the Ayr Commission, a Major Cockburn of the Guards, persuaded the Commission to send them to Edinburgh to be dealt with there by the Council. There also they so demeaned themselves that no direct occasion of offence could possibly be found with them ; and they were dismissed with a caution to remember the duty they owed to authority. Lord Cochrane was so angry at this outcome to his efforts on behalf of the Episcopate that he declared that the ministers might turn everything upside down before he would meddle with them again. But the Archbishop, disappointed that they had been so leniently dealt with, did not cease to trouble them ; and it was not long

until he had Mr. Blair of Galston imprisoned in the Heart of Midlothian, from which he was liberated only to die.

The usually prosaic and stern proceedings of the Commission were somewhat relieved the year following (1670) when the Episcopal curate of Maybole, Mr. Jaffray, came into Ayr and told a sorry story. Some of his parishoners, he said, had tried to murder him, and one of them had discharged a pistol straight at his heart. Luckily for him, he had been carrying a book against the particular part of his body behind which his heart was beating, and the book had caught the bullet. And if they did not credit his story, said Mr. Jaffray, here was the book with the bullet mark all complete! That was so far satisfactory, but what about the waistcoat? And he was unable to produce it; with the result that his complaint and appeal was ruled out of Court, and that, in place of receiving the financial consolation to which he had been looking forward, he was laughed out of Court altogether, and retired to the capital of Carrick much cast down and crestfallen.

One year after another the fight went on. The town of Ayr did not, officially, give the Government much trouble, but there were many individual townsmen, nevertheless, who were profoundly sympathetic with the cause of the

Covenanters, the country outside was thoroughly disaffected, the faithful ministers took the risks willingly that were attendant upon preaching in the open air, and the people flocked in great crowds to those gatherings in the wilderness. It became necessary, therefore, to adopt sterner measures, and a more systematic repression. Commissions were appointed to give effect to the Arch-Episcopal policy. Ayrshire was stigmatised, in a letter of the Council of October, 1677, as one of the most considerable seminaries of rebellion in this Kingdom, and the Earls of Glencairn and Dundonald, and Lord Ross, were instructed to take effectual means to "bear down the Conventicles." The King himself (11th December, 1677) felt constrained to put in a letter that he was very much concerned because of the "great and insufferable insolencies committed by the fanatics" in the way of preaching "rebellion," in usurping and invading the churches and pulpits of "the regular clergy," their continued schisms and their continuance in unlawful assemblies. But neither did the monarchical protestation avail anything; and the result was the bringing of the Highland Host into the westland. That Host numbered close upon 10,000 men, not to mention the great array of stragglers who followed them in the hope of plunder and booty. "They had good store of iron shackles, as if

they were to lead back vast numbers of slaves; and thumb-screws to make their examinations and trials with"; and as the county of Ayr was the most "rebellious," the Highland Host were permitted "to go to a greater length" here than elsewhere.

The Magistrates of Ayr were not slow to conform to the requirements of the State, and in February of 1678 they obtained what was known as a Bond of Relief. "Forasmuch," ran this document, "as the Magistrates and Councillors of the said burgh of Ayr have by special order and command of the lords of the committee of His Majesty's Privy Council, bound and obliged themselves, and their successors in their offices, their wives, bairns, and servants respective, shall in no ways be present at any Conventicles and disorderly meetings in time coming, but shall live orderly in obedience to the law, conform to the Acts of Parliament made thereanent . . . and further, that they shall not reset, supply, nor commune with forfeited persons, intercommuned ministers, or vagrant preachers, but shall do their utmost endeavours to apprehend their persons . . . we, and ilk one of us for our own parts, bind and oblige us to warrant, free, relieve, and hold skaithless the said present Magistrates and Council, and their successors in their offices, of their engagement and obligement

foresaid." But while the authorities thus conformed to the Bond, many of the inhabitants would have none of it. Fortunately for them, the magisterial friendship thus made with the State stood them in good stead, and, though the Highland Host was desolating and persecuting all around, the royal burgh appears to have been comparatively immune.

It was a terrible time that Ayrshire had when the Highland Host was abroad in it. The story of their procedure is a chapter in brigandage of the very worst character. They took free quarters; they robbed people on the high road, stripping them naked miles from home, as well as in their own houses; they knocked down and wounded those who complained of their doings; they stole, and wantonly destroyed, cattle; they subjected people to the torture of fire to compel them to discover to them where their money was hidden; they threatened to burn down houses if their demands were not at once complied with; besides free quarters, they demanded money every day; they compelled even poor families to buy brandy and tobacco for them; they cut and wounded people from sheer devilment; "and it is fit to draw a veil over their excesses of unnatural and cruel wickednesses up and down the country."

What they cost the county of Ayr even in

money could never be told with any exactitude, but a statement was drawn up by the noblemen and gentlemen of the shire for the purpose of being submitted to the sovereign, and it gives some idea of the depredations to which the inhabitants were subject at the hands of this barbarous host. Every item was vouched for in full, and it was believed that, large as the sum total was, it did not amount in reality to much more than one-half of the real amount. Here in summary is this "Account of the Losses the following Parishes sustained by quartering, robbing, and spoiling of the soldiers and Highland Host, 1678":—

KYLE

Ayr and Alloway,	£12,120	0	0
St. Quivox,	900	0	0
Monkton,	2,700	0	0
Tarbolton,	6,180	0	0
Galston,	3,679	0	0
Craigie,	735	0	0
Riccarton,	2,844	0	0
Dundonald,	3,373	0	0
Barnweil,	836	0	0
Symington	1,300	6	0
Mauchline, Muirkirk, and Dalgain,	8,985	8	0
Coylton,	3,537	12	0
Ochiltree and Auchinleck,	5,211	7	8
Cumnock, Old and New,	3,015	6	4
Total for Kyle	£55,419	11	0

CARRICK

Straiton,	£12,000	0	0
Colmonell,	10,000	0	0
Kirkoswald and Girvan,	1,816	0	0
Barr,	1,000	0	0
Dailly,	180	0	0
Maybole,	1,700	0	0
Dalmellington and Kirkmichael,	4,981	0	0
Total for Carrick,	£31,677	0	0

CUNNINGHAM

Kilmarnock and Fenwick,	£14,431	0	0
Kilwinning,	5,895	15	8
Stevenston,	622	12	4
Ardrossan,	1,549	13	4
Dalry,	653	12	8
Dunlop,	2,629	16	6
Irvine parish (without the town),	1,029	0	4
Largs,	1,907	0	0
Kilbride,	692	0	0
Kilbirnie,	2,080	0	0
Loudoun,	2,934	13	4
Dreghorn and Pearceton,	1,505	17	0
Kilmaurs,	3,250	15	0
Stewarton,	6,062	12	8
Beith,	4,891	0	0
The Isle of Meikle Cumbray,	266	13	4
Total for Cunningham,	£50,402	15	0
Total for the Shire of Ayr,	£137,499	6	0

In reckoning the value, it has to be borne in mind that the "pounds" are "Scots," and that

£1 Scots is equal in value to no more than 1s. 8d. sterling. This at once reduces the amount to less than £12,000 sterling. The burgh of Irvine and Dalrymple parish are omitted from the list, but Irvine is said to have been very severely treated; and probably we should not be far astray if we were to put down the total for the county at £13,000. This does not seem to be a very great sum at first sight; but when the whole circumstances are borne in mind, it will be seen that in reality it was a gross and iniquitous infliction, and that its exaction must have been the occasion of much suffering. The shire had fewer than 50,000 persons in it at the time, old and young; and the value of money was enormously greater then than it is now. A man in those days who had an income of £15 sterling would have been well-to-do; certainly as well off as a man would be to-day with six times as much. The losses therefore represented an equivalent of between £70,000 and £80,000 at the value of money to-day; or about 30s. per head of the population, old and young. Carrying the equivalent forward till now, the corresponding sum to-day, with a population of a quarter of a million, would be not less than £375,000; and we take it that if this were exacted in one year from Ayrshire by any means whatever, as a tribute or exaction to any

outside and hostile force, it would leave the county poor indeed. Yet such, in cash alone, was the price that the fathers had to pay because they would not conform to an alien and non-national faith. One instance of the suffering in loss of substance which they had to endure may be given. Dalmellington had 900 Highlanders quartered upon it. "Every merkland had twenty for their share; and when some were sent to a neighbouring parish there remained eight upon every merkland; and they had their sixpence a day, besides free quarters and prodigious plunder."

To make sure that Ayrshire was properly "reduced," a committee appointed by the Privy Council held occasional meetings at Ayr. At one of those (4th March, 1678) garrisons were appointed to be in the house of Blairquhan in Carrick, where an hundred foot and twenty horses were to be quartered; in Barskimming, of fifty foot and ten horses; and in Cessnock the same number. The Commissioners of Excise for the shire were at the same time ordered to meet at Ayr three days later "and with all diligence, to go about the providing of one hundred and twenty-six beds, twenty-four pots, as many pans, two hundred and forty spoons, sixty timber dishes, as many timber cups, and forty timber stoups, and to distribute them to the said garrisons proportionally, conform to the number of men;

also to provide coal and candle for the garrisons respective." The Commissioners of Excise had obviously no heart for such work, and they failed to assemble themselves as they had been bidden do. A second order was issued to them to meet on the 12th, but neither did they gather together on that day. The Committee of Council had in consequence to tackle to the work themselves, and accordingly, when the Commissioners failed to respond to their call, they issued the following order, which is particularly interesting in so far as it deals with the prices of provender for man and beast. These were no doubt the market prices of the time :—

"At Ayr, 12th March, 1678, the Lords of the Committee having, by order of His Majesty's Privy Council, caused warn the Commissioners of Excise in the shire of Ayr to meet this day with the Committee to set prices on the provisions following for the use of the garrisons, to cause bring in provisions and other necessaries, when the same can be most conveniently had in the next adjacent parishes, they paying the prices underwritten, which the Committee has thought fit, in absence of the foresaid, to set thereupon, viz. :—Each stone of hay, 2s. ; each threave of straw, 4s. ; boll of oats, 50s. in Carrick, 55s. in Kyle ; each boll of meal, 5 merks ; each boll of malt, £5 ; each stone of cheese, £1 10s. ; each

stone of pork, £1 16s.; each peck of French grey salt, 10s.; each peck of Scots salt, 5s.; each stone of butter, £2 8s.; each dozen of eggs, 1s. 4d.; each pint of milk, 1s.; each hen, 4s.; each mutton bulk, £2. And ordain the said prices to continue until the Council or Committee give further order thereanent."

Here again the money is "Scots," and the real values are, in money sterling, but one-twelfth of the face-value. The pint of milk, for example, at 1s., really cost a penny in English money. But a little of the Highland Host in the matter of time went a long way, and in the end of April they were withdrawn by the Government. As they marched for the north again, they looked as if they had been at the sacking of some besieged town. "They were loaded with spoil," says the historian; "they carried away a great many horses, and no small quantity of goods out of merchants' shops, whole webs of linen and woollen cloths, pots, pans, gridirons, shoes, and other furniture, whereof they had pillaged the country." Thus they passed hence, but it was many a long day ere the Highland Host was forgotten of Ayrshire.

The town of Ayr was, upon the whole, singularly free from any participation in, or from any of the more serious consequences that were the result of, the rising of Drumclog or of the more serious affair of Bothwell Brig that followed.

So far as Drumclog was concerned, that was not much to be wondered at, for the conflict between the dragoons of Claverhouse and the Covenanters on the Lanarkshire border was the result, the immediate consequence, of a conventicle which took place so far away from the royal burgh that it was no matter for surprise that none of the townsfolk were present at it. After the skirmish, a troop of Covenanters did indeed ride down to Ayr, and the Provost and magistrates made haste to welcome them, no doubt under the unrealised impression that the tide, which had still eight of its worst years to run, had at last turned. On the burgh ports there had been bleaching the heads of Covenanters who had laid down their lives in the cause ; and these they took down and buried : then, headed by the town drummer, they marched to the Market Cross and proclaimed their declaration. In this they denounced as illegal all the Acts and statutes that had been passed against the reformed faith, and claimed for themselves and for the nation the rights and privileges that had been wrested from the Church of Rome, and which had now been filched from them by Charles II.

But the enthusiasm begotten of Drumclog did not last very long, nor does it seem as if Ayr had reciprocated with any strong contingent of her sons to the popular cause. At Bothwell

Bridge the Covenanting army, badly led, undisciplined, and seething with theological disputations, literally went to pieces, and the cause of organised rebellion in the open field was at an end. Ayr kept a comparatively calm "sough," in presence of John Grahame of Claverhouse and his dragoons, who were in evidence in all the panoply of their might and power every day on her streets. Three of her burgesses only were arrested and imprisoned on the general charge of having either been at Bothwell Bridge, or of having sheltered rebels and traitorous persons who had been there—James Wood, William Ranken, schoolmaster, and Andrew Ramsay, baker.

And yet there are indications that at this period, when the rule of the military was strong in Ayr, the municipal authorities, backed beyond any doubt by the townspeople, were beginning to fret over the grievous interference that then was with their liberties. What was known as the Test Act tried the Presbyterians very badly. By the terms of this obnoxious statute it was necessary to affirm, and to swear upon solemn oath, "that the King's majesty is the only supreme governor of this realm, over all persons and in all causes, ecclesiastical as civil"; that it was unlawful for subjects, "upon pretence of reformation, or upon any pretence whatsomever,"

to enter into covenants or leagues or to assemble in council; and that "I shall never rise in arms, or enter into such covenants and assemblies, and that there lies no obligation on me from the National Covenant or the Solemn League and Covenant to endeavour any change or alteration in the government." This was Erastianism with a vengeance, the rule of the King in all things; and it was no matter for surprise that Ayr's civic heads thought it high time to have a saving clause. But, on the other hand, there was danger in doing anything, save complying with the orders of the ruling powers. Grahame of Claverhouse was made a burgess (6th July, 1679), along with two other military gentlemen; fit associates for "the bloody Dalziel," who, in the fall of 1682, had also his name added to the burgess roll. And, as has been said, the town was a place of arms.

Open protest was nevertheless made against the imposition of the Test Act by the authorities. The Provost of Ayr at the time (1680-81) was William Cunningham, the younger; Robert Hunter and William Reid were the Bailies, Joseph Smith was the Treasurer, and Thomas Cathcart the Dean of Guild. Called to make a return of "fit and loyal persons" qualified to hold office under the Test Act, instead of doing so, the Provost had "most undutifully and contemptuously" called for the

town's officers at the foot of the stair leading up to the Tolbooth, and had dismissed them, "telling them that there was to be no more government in that place," with alleged intent to create tumults, uproars, and confusion, "and to cast the burgh loose from all government and order." For this offence, and for having encouraged the Covenanters "to take down the heads of several rebels" affixed to the public places, and permitted the town drummer to make their declaration at the Cross, he was fined in £200, and he and his coadjutors were declared to be unfit to hold office, and a new Town Council were nominated by the Lords of the Privy Council. The Provost of this body was one Vaxley Robson, who is supposed to have come to Ayr with the forces of Cromwell, and to have remained here after the Roundheads had been recalled at the Restoration; the Bailies were Robert Hunter and William Brisbane; the Treasurer was Adam Hunter; and the Dean of Guild, Robert Dalrymple. This setting aside the constitution of the burgh by the Government was the occasion of great ferment, and, as might have been expected, affairs did not go very smoothly. Six of the new Councillors refused to take the Test, and retired from office. The two burgh schoolmasters for the same reason resigned their situations, and Bailie Robert Hunter was

excluded from the municipality altogether for his contumacy in leaving the Council when it was in session, and inducing others to do the same, for the purpose of weakening the authority of the civic rulers. The Trades in January of the following year were similarly disaffected. A former deacon-convener, William Hunter, handed in "ane petition or mutinous paper" against the Test, declaring it to be "an invasion of the rights of the people." Notwithstanding all the influence that could be brought to bear on them, a majority refused to take the Test, with the result that no deacons were elected at all. The Privy Council had no alternative, in their own view, to appointing deacons for themselves; and in order to mark their disapproval of the conduct of William Hunter, they ordered that he should lose his freedom, that his burgess ticket should be "lacerated and riven" at the Market Cross after tuck of drum, that he should be fined in 500 merks, and imprisoned until the fine should be paid.

The following year (1683) the county was in a highly troublous condition, and the State not only thought it necessary to continue the garrison in Ayr at its full strength, but also sent a powerful contingent of judges, advocates, writers, and other limbs of the law, to the royal burgh, in order to impress the inhabitants. Of

these, there were no fewer than twenty-seven, including three judges and the King's Advocate, "the bloody M'Kenzie," who were made burgesses. It must have been highly galling to the burgesses, who set such store on the honours pertaining to the regality, to have heralds, macers, and trumpeters thus constituted freemen; but besides these, they had to endure the added humiliation of having "thirty-seven servitours" admitted as well, not to mention "David Smith, common cook in Ayr," who was honoured "at the desire of Colonel John Grahame of Claverhouse, besides two trumpeters and a mason." Surely this was bringing the valued right of honorary citizenship to a low pass!

It is clear from those incidents that the town of Ayr during that period must have had a succession of excitements of no common order. We are inclined to think sometimes that life in the olden times must have been slow; but even with the mere outline of the story of these times of persecution, it may well be believed that the fathers had no lack of excitement. They had known the Cromwell invasion. They had seen the town ruled by the soldiers of the Commonwealth, and great works of fortifications go up before their eyes between the town and the sea. They had shared in the excitement of the Restoration—a sorry Restoration for Scotland—and now Charles

II., regardless of danger, and of the experience that had cost his royal father his head on the bloody scaffold of Whitehall, was pursuing a course that, continued long enough, could only end in another supercession of the Stuart reign. How their hopes of relief must have gone up with the news of the Covenanters' victory at Drumclog, and fallen again when the tidings came of the stricken field of Bothwell Brig! One can understand the wrath of the burghers when their Provost was superseded and a State-made chief magistrate was elected in his stead; and it is not too late yet to recall, with a measure of admiration, the stout old ex-deacon-convener, William Hunter, who had the courage, even in the teeth of authority, and with John Grahame of Claverhouse at his door, to speak out for the rights of the people, even at the cost of having his burgess ticket lacerated and riven at the Market Cross, the while Clavers' drummers beat his honourable tattoo.

As we have said, Ayr was not very prominent at this period of the struggle that ended in the Second Reformation, but it is gratifying to recall the fact that her sons did, in their own way, defend the rights of the community against King and prelate and Royalist soldier, and too-ready circle of the Scottish Court nobility, prone to turn upon the peasantry

and the townsfolk, whom they ought to have protected.

William Brisbane was one of the Bailies in 1682, and he was Provost in 1684. His sympathies were with the persecuted Presbyterians, and, like the ex-deacon-convener, William Hunter, he did not try to hide them. He was on friendly terms with the outed field-preachers, and there is every reason to believe that his better feeling revolted in righteous indignation when he saw the stricken heads of the Covenanters exposed on the burgh ports. A woman had been condemned to death for her "scandalous principles against the Government." What these were it is not difficult to guess. The poor creature lay in durance in the Tolbooth, waiting the coming of the day when she should expiate her offending against the authorities upon the scaffold. It was the custom to send the curates to prepare prisoners under the last dread sentence for their coming doom. But the condemned woman was not of their way of thinking, and she craved spiritual nourishment more to her liking. Bailie Brisbane came fearlessly to her aid. He brought in from the country James Lawrie, a minister who was fugitive from his charge for his non-compliance with the compromising tenets of the State, and Matthew Baird, who was afterwards ordained minister

of Monkton, and introduced them to the condemned cell. Nor did he shirk the danger attendant on such action. While the ministers were instructing the woman in the faith, such as they knew it, and such as she desired to have it, he himself kept the door of the prison, and refused to let the curates in. The result was that the woman was strengthened to the uttering of a testimony for the Covenants and for the Presbyterian faith on the scaffold, and to the condemnation of the principles of the Government.

The minister of the parish of the period, the Rev. William Adair, is memorialised in statuary —one might almost say in effigy—within an iron-railed enclosure at the side of the Old Church. He was a man, to all appearance, who had the knack of thinking a good deal without saying very much. He maintained his own Presbyterianism intact, yet was careful not to come into conflict with the Episcopal clergy of the town. But the Test was too much for him, and he would not take it. He could not possibly admit the absolute supremacy of the sovereign in all matters spiritual, as well as temporal. In the end of 1681 he was suspended for his contumacy, but was reponed in February of 1682, having, he protested, escaped for the third time "from the restraints that were put upon him in the exercise

of his ministry." In autumn of the same year, he again refused to take the Test, and was again, and finally, deprived of his office. Two years later, in 1684, he died. Thus, in his latter end, he earned for himself the respect of those who had no sympathy with the policy of expediency that so many pursued under cover of the Indulgence and the Test; and, if he did not live a very heroic figure, he, at all events, died a sufferer for what he believed to be the good cause.

The encouragement that was given to witness-bearing, and the material rewards that were the perquisites of the informers, brought many of these harpies upon the scene. To what a length they were prepared to go to advantage themselves at the expense of their neighbours, is evident from a case that excited great interest in Ayr at the time: the case of John, Lord Bargany, who had a town house within the royal burgh. There is reason to believe that Bargany, as well as his kinsman, the Earl of Cassillis, was in sympathy with the Covenanting cause. The Earl had already been in trouble because he would not put the law against conventicles into force with sufficient rigour in Carrick; and information—even suborned and perjured—would have been out of the question against Bargany, had he been a loyal out-and-out King's man. In

the end of 1679 he was taken prisoner, and thrown into Blackness. There he lay for some months, petitioning the Government the while to have a definite charge made against him, and protesting his loyalty; and it was not until February, 1680, that he was indicted. One charge against him was that in 1677, or 1678, he had publicly regretted that the Earl of Lauderdale had escaped assassination; a second was that he had remarked to a notary that they would never get their business properly done so long as Lauderdale was alive; a third was that he was in communication with John Welsh of Irongray, a son of John Welsh of Ayr, and "a factious trumpet of sedition and treason"; a fourth was that he had tried to persuade Cunningham of Bedlam to join the Covenanting army before Bothwell Bridge; and a fifth was that he had publicly maintained the principles of the reformers, declared for the rooting out of Episcopacy, and denounced the curates as rogues and knaves.

Had it been possible to prove all those things against Bargany, he would assuredly have suffered for them; but he was no sooner liberated from Blackness on a heavy bail bond, than the diet against him was deserted, and nothing more was heard of it. It is said that Bargany discovered, by diligent investigation,

that Cunningham of Montgreenan and others had been suborned, among others, by Sir John Dalrymple, to give false evidence against him, under promise of sharing in the estates that were to be confiscated, but that, as the day for the trial approached, their consciences rebelled against the crime they were going to commit. Bargany would have pushed his cause against his enemies to the fullest extent, but the Duke of York, the King's brother, and the heir to the throne, interposed to prevent inquiry. That his sympathies were with the Covenanters is proved by the fact that he entered heartily into the Revolution, and (1689) raised a regiment of 600 foot for the public service. He died 6th May, 1693.

The following is a list of the Provosts of Ayr from the Restoration in 1660 to the Revolution in 1688:—

1660. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1661. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1662. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1663. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1664. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1665. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1666. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1667. Thomas Knight.
1668. Thomas Knight.
1669. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1670. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.

1671. William Cuninghame of Brownhill
1672. Thomas Knight.
1673. John Moore of Park.
1674. John Moore of Park.
1675. John Cuninghame.
1676. Robert Doock.
1677. Robert Doock.
1678. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1679. William Cuninghame of Brownhill
1680. William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1681. Vaxley Robson.
1682. Vaxley Robson.
1683. William Brisbane.
1684. Robert Hunter of Dogland.
1685. Robert Hunter of Dogland.
1686. William Cuninghame, yr., of Brownhill.
1687. Sir William Wallace of Craigie.
1688. Sir William Wallace of Craigie.

Thus things moved on towards the Revolution, and Ayr, like other places, was ready to welcome it when it came. The town rose for King William, it jubilated much that the Stuarts had gone the way that they had so diligently prepared for themselves to travel, and was ready with its armed men to resist the efforts that it was expected the exiled King James would put forth for the recovery of his own. It had come through the shadow and through the night; it had suffered and borne, and its cause had endured; and with the breaking of the Revolution day, it shared with the country at large in the

blessings of freedom of conscience, and the right to worship at will and to hold by those principles of just government and toleration which abide with us to this day.

IN THE DAYS OF THE "WIND-JAMMERS"

He who knows Ayr Harbour only in these latter days of steamships can form but a poor impression of what the port was like in the days of what sailors call the "wind-jammers." Sometimes things are busy on the quay, with shunt of engine, and panting of steam crane, and rattle of gear, and the noise of the tumbling coals into the capacious holds of the iron boats, waiting with steam up and all hands on board to have the wire hawser taken in and to start on the way for Ireland. Many a night, amid the blackness of a clinging gloom, and under a twinkling starlight, the electric lights are brilliant, and in their sheen the workers are pushing and driving to get the black diamonds on board, the hatches on, and the ships to sea; and the man who has an eye for the picturesque may catch many an effective glimpse of smoke stacks and masts and shrouds, of ships' lights, red and green and clear, of the deep tints of the light-houses, and of the shadows that are thrown on to the mirror face of the river. But comparatively speaking, all this

is as nothing to what was seen in the good old days of the sailing craft, when, after a long and a strong tack of westerly winds, the breeze had gone round to the norrit or the eastward, and the colliers were clearing for the passage to Ireland.

There is a sense of strength and of power in the steamers as they put to sea, or arrive from the other side. The winds blow where they list, but the steamship holds on her own way careless whether the wind is ahead or abeam or astern. There is no setting of sail, of pulling or yeo-ho'ing on halliards, of tightening of sheets, of stretching of leeches, or of trimming of yards so as to catch all the available breeze that is going. The course is straight, the steamer's stem is sharp and clean cut, the propeller is churning the water, and in so many hours the vessel will be alongside the quay in Belfast, and she will be back in Ayr the following day to begin her round afresh. But what are these few steamships, with their trailing smoke and their driving engines, to the once great fleet that spread their sails like wings, and that, supplemented by other fleets from Troon and Irvine and Ardrossan, flecked the bay with their canvas, many scores of them, and that reached, with varying intervals, all the road from the Harbour bar to the western horizon somewhere about Ailsa Craig?

These were the days of the sail-maker and

the carpenter and the rigger, and the caulker and the wooden shipbuilder; of bright pump-handles, polished by the hands of men, who had enough to do to keep down the water in the well that had come through the opening seams and the straining joints, and that kept the sea-boys fresh and original in their objurgations of the hard fate that was theirs to "grind water for the captain's ducks." And these were the days, too, of about as "hard" a series of old skippers as ever sailed salt water. They were proud of their craft, and they swore by her. Her sails might be old and patched and dirty, and her gear might be very much the worse of the wear, and she might not be a beauty to look at; but by George! and by Gemini! and by Crikey! she could sail; she could run; she could lay up to it; she could sling the water about her; she could ride the seas like a duck; and she could reel off as many knots on the log-reel as any China tea-clipper or south-spinner that ever went to the east'ard or doubled the Cape, or that rolled home by St. Helena with stun'-sails on both sides, a ringtail, water-sails, three royals aloft, and a sky-scraper at the main.

In these days it was no uncommon thing to see the quay walls lined with coasters, three, four, and five deep, both sides of the river, and from the wee quay right all the way to the foot

of the Academy Brae. At low water the one half of them were lying on the mud. But what of that? When the skipper of one of these vessels wanted to give the ship's bottom a coat of tar, he had her hauled on to the sand-bank, in the middle of the river, opposite the old Fort wall, and grounded there. The tide went out and left her dry, and, naturally, she heeled over to one side or the other. Armed with long-handled brushes and cans of coal-tar, the sailors got down on to the sand-bank and started to paint. They got over their work pretty smartly. With a big-headed brush, and a correspondingly big canful of tar, a lot of space could be covered in a tide. The one side done, the vessel was canted to the other, and that was done too, and the old craft shone in the sunlight. Thus accustomed to ground, she took quite kindly to it. But when the wind got into the east or north, there was no time to be lost, and the whole fleet got ready for sea. The tug took them out in strings, three or four at a time, and, as they towed down the river, the canvas was set and the yards trimmed, and the fore-and-afters hauled up taut on the stays; and great was the yelling and the shouting.

The Harbour had a most excellent berthing master in "big Stewart"—Captain Stewart he came to be called, by right of office and virtue of service. It was a liberal education in the

possibilities of the human voice to hear that man at his best on such a day as this. Distance was nothing to him. He could stand on the north quay and converse without the slightest difficulty with a shipmaster on the south side of the river. From a dozen vessels the sounds of the seafaring men arose; the skippers shouting their orders, the yards creaking up the masts, the sheaves of the blocks screaming like protesting wheelbarrows; many a "Yeo-ho" and "Heave-oh," and "Cheerily does it," and "Now then, all together," with "'Vast heaving," and "Belay," and other incitements and inducements and orders couched in similiar phrase and more or less rhythmic diction; and, in addition, there was a prevailing abundance of strong language and fiery adjectives, and pointed allusions to the unknown world, and absolutely plain allusions to lubbers and swabs, and sons of guns and chuckle-headed greasers. But over it all, and amid it all, Captain Stewart conversed pleasantly from across the quay with the objects of his attention; and, somehow or other, by means of a process of pushing and driving and bumping, that extended over hours of bustle and excitement, the whole fleet got to sea and left the Harbour a wilderness, the berths empty, the quay walls deserted, silence in room of a combination of babel and pandemonium, and the bay white with the sails of more

than a hundred vessels. That was a sight we shall never see again, and as picturesque and gallant a sight as one could desire to see.

Mighty was that great regatta. No skipper of *Thistle*, or *Valkyrie*, or *Shamrock*, that ever spread her wings in the hope of bringing the America Cup to the eastward again, ever watched more anxiously the setting of the canvas, the shifting of the wind, or that the man at the tiller lost nothing, than did the masters of the colliers when the fleet was under weigh. There were one or two of them that were clipper-built, and clean run in the stern, that could slip through the sea very smartly ; but the great body of them were bluff and heavy, and making as much noise smashing into the waves as if they were south-spinners reeling off a dozen or fourteen knots an hour. They flung the water about them properly, and took good care to let everybody on board know that they were going, and that they meant to go ; and many a good bottle of whisky, and many a pound of tobacco, was lost and won over a race between schooners that never were built for any other or any more romantic purpose than to carry coal.

It was in the bulk that the fleet looked well. Off the land you could not see the patched sails, or the general rough-and-tumble look of the craft ; what you saw was a hundred vessels and more

with the sun shining on them; a scene of real life and brightness robbed of all the prosaic elements of the quayside. The sails were sere—what of it? They shone in the light. The gear was old; but distance made it trig and taut. The masts were worth being watched when there was any strain on them; but so long as they held, all was well. The crews were not smart to the eye, but they could haul the yards round, and pass the sheets over, and take an extra pull on the braces, and bowse down the tacks; and they knew all the waves by headmark, and every point and headland and light on the road. They were really sailors. They knew the ropes, and on the darkest night they needed nobody to tell them what was a clew-line, and what was a leech-line, and what was a bunt-line; and they could lay out on the topsail yard and haul out the ear-rings and tie the reef points, without putting granny knots in them; and there wasn't a man among them who couldn't take his trick at the wheel, or get into the chains to heave the lead, or who didn't know how to keep the vessel full-and-bye, or steer straight on a star on the edge of one of the stays.

There were a few of the colliers that were so rickety that they were neither wind nor water-tight. They creaked and leaked, and had to be gingerly handled. It was said of them that they were held together by the paint; and when they

went to sea it was in the firm faith that somehow or other they would get across. When they left Ayr, the pilots took good-bye with them. "Their sails were old, their sides were rotten," as the shanty had it; and if they were caught in a sudden storm, nothing saved them, except the faith of the mariners; but not infrequently that faith wasn't quite good enough, and they ended their days, and sometimes the lives of the crew, on some lee shore, or in the endeavour to make some harbour.

The fleet came often as it had gone. In the morning the quay was deserted. By noon the pioneers of the coming squadron were in the offing; and by night all the berths were occupied and the coal harries were at it again. And the colliers were a great source of profit to the ship-chandlers, the sail-makers, the carpenters, and the shops. They bought their stores where they chanced to be, and there was no stint of food on board of them. After wet weather they dropped down their sails and dried them in the sun and air, and the Harbour had the look of a vast washing-green. In not a few of them the captain's "lady" was an object of interest. She lived on board, and seemed to have a good time of it, and nothing in the way of weather scared her. She knew what sailors were, and, even if they were sometimes a little rough, and swore

more than was good for them—well, they were sailors, and these little traits of character were part of their way.

Let me tell how one of these old coasters sailed her last passage. The story goes back to a stormy November day in the year 1881 : a dark day, alternated with blinks of sunshine ; a day of very heavy hail-squalls, of a sea that was running high over the south pier-head, lighthouse and all, and of a fierce westerly gale that veered to the nor'-west in the squalls. The *J. W. Harris* was a brigantine, square-rigged forrit and fore-and-aft on the mainmast, and she was bound to Ayr from Ireland. She wasn't too staunch at her best, and what with the frightful straining of her timbers as the result of the gale, she was taking in a lot of salt water through the seams. The hands did the best they could at the pumps to keep the water from rising in the hold ; but it was a hard job to pump, the way the vessel was rolling. The sea was making a clean breach of her ; the sailors were standing at the pumps sometimes to the waist deep in green water, and at the angle at which the brigantine was lying, the pumping wasn't much use. Besides, the more water there came in, the deeper the *J. W. Harris* sank in the sea, and the deeper she sank the more she leaked. So the boys gave up the pumps, and the skipper saw

that all he could do was to run for it. By right, he ought to have been under very short canvas, but it would be touch-and-go in any case, and he cracked on everything that the foremast had to carry. It looked from the land as if the man was mad, to see him with his foresail, an unreefed topsail and a top-gallant sail all set on a day like that, but of course we had no idea that it was a race for life, and that the racer was getting deeper and deader in the sea all the time. The foremast must have been a good stick, and the sails much better than they looked; else all would have gone, and the *J. W. Harris* with them. The skipper himself was at the wheel, and he handled the brigantine like a boat; the crew, four in number, were in the rigging; and the wind and the waves were right astern. There was a big crowd ashore, very little was said, and what was said was short and spoken very low.

With a savage, cutting hail-squall behind her that must have stretched every ring-bolt in the brigantine, and that split the top-gallant sail till it flew in ribbons, the *J. W. Harris* reached the bar. It was very bad just there, but fifty yards further, and the *J. W. Harris* would have been in smooth water. But as she was in the very act of crossing the bar she took a horrible stagger, and made a plunge as if she would

founder, and as she tried to recover herself she swung round broadside to the sea, refused to answer her helm, and began to heel over. It was a sore minute that with everybody who was looking on. In less time than it takes to say it, the waves had her between the breakwater and the north pier, and over she went, her masts right down in the sea and the big billows running clean over her. Lying on her side, she turned right round, and, strange to say, came up again, and all her five men were still in the rigging, to which they had lashed themselves, with the exception of the skipper, who had made a spring aloft at the last moment, and who had clung to the shrouds with a life-and-death grip, while the *J. W. Harris* had gone over and had squirmed herself about in the raging water. Behind the breakwater the rocks and the boulders were waiting, and, crash after crash, the billows landed her among them. After that there was the scurry to get the lifeboat out, and everything wasn't quite what it should have been there. The first effort to get at the brigantine was futile, and two of the lifeboat crew got washed out of the boat and came very near losing the number of their mess, and the boat herself got damaged, but kept the water like the staunch little craft that she was. The second time she tried it the storm was passing away, and everybody was saved but one

poor fellow who got entangled in the floating cordage when he took his jump for life, and who was never seen again. And that was how the *J. W. Harris* passed away. But the ship's dog, a black retriever, came ashore himself, shook himself as he emerged from the sea, and ran away up the quay as if it was nothing to him to be chucked on to the land by a wave that might as easily have dashed him dead on the rocks as lifted him over them.

It was after that fashion that many of these old craft went to Davy Jones' locker. Still, like everything else, they served their day and generation, and the men who sailed them were as hardy a race of sea-dogs as ever ploughed the salt water. It was said of one old skipper who lived a life in the Irish trade that he knew every wave between Ayr pier-head and the Cove of Cork, and that if the schooner had been only let go at the second buoy she could have found the way to Ireland herself. Once she was blown off the coast, and when the daylight came there was nothing to be seen but the sea. The skipper and the mate went below and brought out the chart. They sat one on each side of the cabin table looking at it. "Where d'ye think she is, captain?" asked the mate. "I reckon she's about here," the master replied, and as he spoke he laid his gigantic hand on about two hundred

square miles of water. And no doubt she was there, or thereabouts.

The change from the sailing vessel to the steamship began as far back as the decade between the twenties and the thirties, when "the *Ayr*," with her high walking-beam, her long smoke stack, and her paddles beating the placid water into waves, first entered the Harbour. That was a great day for Ayr—a far greater day than the people had any conception of. They gathered in crowds on the quays and surveyed the new-comer critically. Judged on later-day canons of beauty, she was not beautiful. The builders had naturally clung to their ingrained ideas, so far as they could, of what a ship should be. They reckoned with steam propulsion assisted by the sails, and so they gave her a bowsprit and heavy masts, and a fair spread of sailcloth. And the old sailors scoffed at her, and derided her. She might do very well, they swore, in smooth water, and when there wasn't too much wind; but for a rough-and-tumble day in the firth—commend them to the packet ships, that could live in anything, and come into port when it was blowing a hurricane. She was only an experiment, they reckoned, and when they had done with her and proved her vain, the clippers would remain. We need not be surprised at their conclusions; if we had been

there, and with no more experience or knowledge than they had, we should have said the very same thing. A veteran townsman, since gone to join the rest of the veterans, told the writer that he could recall the pre-steam locomotive days. The Puffing Billys and all their clan were, in their infancy, ridiculed as permanent impossibilities. The Almighty had made the horse to go twelve miles an hour, and it was not the Divine intent that man should get over the country any faster than that; and, indeed, was it not, to say the least of it, questionable whether the attempt to outdo the horse in speed was not a blasphemous interference with the evident mind of Heaven in the matter of locomotion? The *Ayr of Ayr* was one of the precursors of an era.

But she was not the first *Ayr of Ayr*. Before her the packets were of a less elegant and a "bluffer" type. They could stand any amount of driving. There was no "tenderness" about them, either; and they came up the firth, or across the firth, or down the firth, regardless of how Boreas might assert himself, even in the wildest and worst days of the autumn equinox. The Glasgow packet boat that Skipper Paton commanded was no clipper. But if she was slow, she was sure, and the master had faith in her and to spare. Somehow, blow high or blow low, she always managed to get to her destination,

and many a good cargo she bore along by the shores of Clyde. As the years went on, the demand arose for something smarter than the old packet, and a company was formed to buy a clipper schooner that had been built by a nobleman for a yacht. They called her the *Ayr of Ayr*, and she was something to be proud of, as, with her sharp stem, she cleft the waters of the firth. There was hardly anything a-going in these parts that could touch her, or to which she could not show her heels. Like a thing of life she walked the waters.

To signalise the purchase of such an up-to-date craft, the owners invited their friends to the trial trip, and one fine day, with a goodly company on board, the *Ayr of Ayr* was headed away for Campbeltown. How they fared a writer —in these latter days the writers have become solicitors — has left on record, in a poetical "Epistle to a Friend." The gentleman in question was a Mr. John Brown, and he is described as a man with a playful fancy, and one of the readiest of pens, both of which tributes to his capacity appear to have been well founded. Mr. Brown used great freedom in discussing his fellow-voyagers. Thus, for instance :

> "But sic a crew! the Lord forbid
> I ere should meet again!
> They ate and drank, and sang and swore
> Withouten fear or shame.

Some gat importance frae their purse,
Some plum'd upon their rank,
Some mendit pots and candlesticks,
Some strutted in a bank."

Becoming more specific, the poet made free with his fellow-lawyers:

"Some writer chiels, who never heard
O' sic a thing as sin,
Had nearly sunk my bonnie bark
Wi' devilry an' din.
Ane o' the crowd his father cursed,
He cursed his ain papa!
A generation far'er back
He d— them ane an' a'."

Still getting to closer quarters with his companions, the poet becomes what in these days of ours would be regarded a shade too personal; but in face of other poetry of the period, it cannot be said that he erred very grievously on the side of ultra-extravagance or exceptional personalities. The excursion appears to have been somewhat characteristic of the times. There was an elder who, tired of wine and wickedness, went fast asleep; one distinguished himself by climbing the mast, and another by tumbling overboard; some roared and sang; some were sick; and indeed, the general conduct of the voyagers was such that the poet was fain to conclude that, if ever ill befell the vessel, it

would all be due to the deeds done on the trial trip.

The most notable event in the history of the steamship *Ayr*—and a very sad event it was—was her running down of the *Comet*. The *Comet* was famous, and she will remain famous, for she was the first steamboat that ever was put upon the Clyde. She was Bell's masterpiece; perhaps not a wholly original creation, but so far as this country was concerned, the first successful attempt at realising the ambitions of the engineers who were trying at that period to adapt steam to the purposes of navigation. The *Ayr* was on her way down the Clyde one dark night, and was off Gourock. She had her lights burning brightly, and there was no real blame attachable to her master or officers for the disaster that followed. The *Comet* was carrying a large contingent of passengers, and the master, assuming safety assured, and careless of his responsibilities, had neglected to show his lights. The company were enjoying themselves, singing and dancing, when, without the slightest warning, the *Ayr* ran into her abeam, stem first, and cut her down to beneath the water-line. The scene changed. The mirth became despair. The song and the dance ceased, and in their stead there were shrieks and groans, and unavailing cries for help. The master of the

Ayr backed out of the entanglement, and, conceiving that his own vessel was going down under him, made for the land, to the utter despair of the passengers and crew of the *Comet*, rapidly settling down in the dark waters. Little time remained for preparation for death, or for the saying of farewells; and in a few minutes after the shock, the *Comet* plunged to the depth, and no fewer than sixty persons found a watery grave. The master of the *Ayr*, who had, unhappily, misjudged the character of the injuries inflicted on his own vessel, was much blamed for having steamed away towards the shore, and left the unfortunates of the *Comet* to their fate; but as the result of the inquiry that followed, he was discharged of any blame. The feeling against him was none the less very strong, and he thought it wise not only to resign his command, but to leave Ayr, where he resided, altogether. There was, as a matter of course, considerable prejudice for a little against steamboats, but as time went on, and people began to realise that the mishap was entirely due to carelessness, it died away. And besides, steamboats had by this time demonstrated so completely their usefulness and their superiority to the sailing vessels, that there could be no going back, so far as they were concerned. They had come to stay, and they are here still.

It was not, however, until the lapse of many a long day that they were regarded as possible media for foreign travel, and therefore they detracted in no way from the glory of the big ships that crossed the sea. Ayr had several barques in the timber trade, among them the *Gog*, the *Magog*, the *Ailsa*, and the *Abbey Craig*. These brought wood from the West Indies, from St. John's, from Quebec; and it was quite an event when one of them loomed up in the bay. This was no common coaster, but an aristocrat of the ocean. The skipper wore a long hat, he was an autocrat within his own sphere, and he was wise in all the ways and arts of the navigator. That bowsprit had pointed to lands in the South, and to lands in the West; the men had roamed the streets of West Indian, of Canadian, of American towns. In the ship's lockers, sealed with the official seals of the Customs Department, was wealth of rum and of sweet tobacco, and every man on board was reckoned, and glorified, as a smuggler of the first sort. Many an Ayr boy was induced to become a sailor by being graciously permitted to climb the rigging as far as the maintop, and there were exceptionally daring youths who even ascended as high as the maintop-gallant yard. Many an Ayr boy also had his first sore sickness in his attempt to become prematurely a man, through the acquisition of

the arts of chewing a bit of sweet tobacco, surreptitiously obtained from one of the sailors.

These barques had an air of romance about them, and, while they lay in port, they were the cynosure of many an interested pair of eyes. Out from their capacious holds, day after day, there came great logs of pine-wood, and the way these plunged into the river never begat any feeling of staleness, or of the familiarity that breeds contempt. One felt, somehow, when they were being loaded up with coals for the outward-bound passage, that the barques were being degraded, but all that was forgotten when the last ton was on board and the little tug came alongside to tow them out beyond the buoys. Before they left the quay walls the canvas was sheeted home, and they gathered way of themselves; and by the time they were between the piers the wind was in the sails, and they were moving along with a freedom that kept the tow rope slack. There was a crowd on the pier-head that cheered, and the sailors cheered back; and the ensign was dipped three times for farewell; and the tug let go the hawser, and away into the westward the barques bore for the lands that were far away, carrying with them westward or southward many a wish for a prosperous voyage and a timely and safe return. It is not so now, for steam has captured the

furthest ocean, and the sailing vessel is of yesterday. It is here still, but it is out-of-date and plebeian.

The revenue of the Harbour in 1800 was £376 3s.; not a very large sum, even for these days, when money went a great deal further than it does now. The exports then, as now, were chiefly coals, and a good many of the black diamonds were got within the royal burgh, a good deal more in Newton and St. Quivox, and the rest from collieries not very far beyond the bounds of the regality. It seldom occurs to the most of us that the coal beneath the town has been wrought out, and that deep down in these darksome depths there are long passages and galleries doleful and gloomy as those of Avernus, where, in times of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers, the colliers worked for their daily bread. Close by where the bridge swings that carries the passenger across the mouth of the shipbuilding yard, there is the shaft of an old pit; a second is close to the sea-wall of the military store-house, a few hundred yards to the south of the former; a third within the precincts of the Citadel—Cromwell's Citadel, much cast down and defaced. On the north side of the river there was a pit where the lighthouse stands, a second along the shore at the Salt Pans, a third at Newtonhead, and a fourth

near the Old Bridge end. Thus, within what is now the police burgh, there were at least eight pits in full swing, and these supplied the town with its coal, and gave of their surplus to the brigs and schooners that lay alongside the quay walls, and into whose holds the black diamonds were shot with the aid of iron "shutes," to be carried across the Channel to Ireland.

There was an Irishman who was pitheadsman at the coal pit at the bridge across the mouth of the shipbuilding yard, and close beside what is still called "the battery," although within the last year or two the "fort," such as it was, has been dismantled of its guns. By some dire mischance one day Pat fell down the shaft. In the nature of things, a fall of more than two hundred feet ought to have killed him; but Pat was an Irishman, he was obviously good at falling, and when he fetched bottom, he landed in a deep "sump" that was full of water. When his friends went for the body, they discovered, to their astonishment, that Pat had himself picked up his own remains, and had dragged them to "coala-firma." And from that day onward it was his pride and his boast that he had taken the biggest high jump on record!

The fathers took their politics and their partisanships very seriously indeed, and so, when the country rocked with the sensations

incident to the trial of Queen Caroline, the wife of the fourth George, the first gentleman in Europe, Ayr had its King's men and its Queen's men, and between them they had a very hot time of it. Queen Caroline had no doubt behaved herself most indiscreetly, but the graver charge upon which she was arraigned at the bar of the House of Lords completely broke down ; and at her very worst, she was an angel in comparison to the lustful monarch to whom she had unhappily been espoused. She made a triumphant entry into London on Coronation Day, but was turned away with somewhat needless brutality from the door of Westminster Abbey.

When in 1820 the word was brought down to Ayr by excited post-boys, and the stage-coach passengers excitedly communicated the news to the waiting crowds, that Queen Caroline had been acquitted of the serious charge made against her character, the Queen's men, who were by far the greater part of the community, resolved on having a day and a night of rejoicing. But this the Magistrates of the royal burgh, who were King's men to the backbone, would not permit. In spite of all his faults, they clung to the monarch and his cause, and intimated that any attempt at public rejoicing within the royal burghal jurisdiction would be treated as an offence, and visited with pains and penalties. Newton

and Wallacetown, however, were not amenable to the magisterial dicta, and accordingly, when the evening came on, the two sides of the water exhibited a striking contrast. In Ayr the houses were dark. The inhabitants sulked. They would not permit such a thing as a stray beam of light to illuminate the funereal-looking streets. There was plenty underground passion, but it was kept in check by the people, and it might have so remained had not events proved too potent for the repression of feeling to endure. To the north of the river, beyond the bridges, the sky was lit with the bonfires. Around these were gathered cheering and enthusiastic crowds. Flags were waving in the light of the fires, and the ruddy glow lit up a scene of great enthusiasm and of animation, that found vent in marching, in declarations of congratulation that right had triumphed, and in something closely approaching to maledictions of the so-called first gentleman of Europe. The attempt of the Magistrates was foolish ; it would have paid them better in every way to have permitted the people to get rid of their joy in a harmless and legitimate way, and it would, further, have saved them the mortification and humiliation to which they were subjected ere the night had worn very far away.

At the quay wall—the southern quay wall, which, being in the royal burgh, was under the

magisterial jurisdiction — lay the ship *Active*, whose skipper, Captain Reid, was a zealous Queen's man. Great was his joy when the news came that the Queen had emerged successful from a cruel and a trying ordeal, and, to give effect to his gratification, he had the vessel decked with bunting, and, in the evening, brilliantly illuminated. The flags and the illuminations naturally attracted a good deal of attention, and when to these was added the firing of guns and the joyful shouting of the crew, it behoved the Magistrates to assert themselves. Here, in the very royal burgh itself, and within the jurisdiction of the constituted authorities, was a direct defiance of their orders! What were they to do? Law and order must be maintained at all costs, come what might, and though the burghal heavens should fall; and accordingly, they called a meeting of themselves, and, with absolute unanimity, resolved that the flags must come down, that the lights must be put out, and that the firing of guns must cease. To give effect to their resolution, they marched in state and in dignity down the quay in a body. And sure enough, there lay the ship, gaily flaunting, brilliantly scintillating defiance to law and order! These things ought not so to be. More than that, the sailors were hurrahing, and discharging their guns, and the infection of illegal jubilation

had already spread to the crowd on the shore. It was surely high time to interfere.

With portly dignity the conscript fathers stepped on board the gallant vessel, and bade the seamen tell the skipper that they, the Provost and Magistrates of the royal burgh of Ayr, were there, and that they desired his immediate presence on deck. Captain Reid was in the cabin, entertaining a company of Queen's men like himself, and actually drinking toasts in honour of their royal heroine. The skipper went on deck. He ought to have been terror-stricken, in the nature of things, to see his ship so taken possession of by the civic mightinesses, but strange to say, he was in nowise disconcerted, and he demanded to know what their business was. The Provost very soon told him who they were and why they were there, and he wound up his informative little discourse with a demand for the removal of the bunting, the quenching of the illuminations, and the ceasing of the gun-firing. But it was of no avail. The skipper was a stony-ground hearer; and the seed sown by the Provost failed to spring up at all. He roundly told the authorities that his ship was afloat, that no man but he had any right to say what he should do on board of her, and that, if they were not ashore in double-quick time, he would order his men to throw them ashore. Shades of the

immortal Nicol Jarvie—throw a Provost, and Bailies, and a Town Council ashore! It was even so. The hearts of the conscript fathers failed them, and the crowd, dense and Queenly in their sympathies, began to jeer them. But what could they do? On the *Active* ship the Caroline star was in the ascendant, and—needs must, the Devil driving—they scrambled on to the quay wall with the faded rags of such dignity as still clung to them, and retreated, all in dule and sorrow, to the Town House. It was a sorry downcome, and the landing-place was none the softer that the crowd yelled amain.

The old folks of Ayr used to say that the first voyage that ever was made by, or in, an iron ship, was made in the Harbour of Ayr. Whether this was so or not, I cannot tell; but there is, at all events, a good story attendant. Somewhere about the year 1813, a tallow-chandler in the town, whose place of business was not far from the house in High Street where Maggie Osborne, the last witch of Ayr, is said to have lived, bought a new boiler for his work. The boiler was made by the Carron Company at Falkirk, was forwarded by them to Glasgow, and was there put on the deck of the *Ayr* packet for trans-shipment to the royal burgh.

It should be said, before proceeding any further, that the tallow-chandler bore a very

strong resemblance to Napoleon Bonaparte; so striking, indeed, that his contemporaries always spoke of him as Bonaparte. Nor did he object to the designation.

When the boiler reached Ayr, Bonaparte discovered, to his intense chagrin, that it was so large that it would not go up the close that led to the place that had been provided for it. His friends laughed, but that did not mend matters much; and indeed, the affair might have involved the unhappy Bonaparte in considerable loss had he not, fortunately for himself, foregathered with a long well-known townsman, Mr. James Morris. Mr. Morris' head was set square on his shoulders. He was both shrewd and practical, and when the tallow-chandler had explained to him his plight, he at once suggested that the boiler should be lowered into the water and floated up to the works, which abutted on the river's brink, and thence transferred to its place. Bonaparte smiled grimly, and asked Mr. Morris if he thought he was such a fool as to believe that iron would swim. Mr. Morris replied that he was in earnest; and, what was more, that he was ready to get into the boiler himself and make the passage up stream in it. Still Bonaparte was unbelieving, and he offered to stake a considerable sum in money on the failure, or the impossibility, of the enterprise. To this Mr. Morris was nothing loth.

The news soon spread, and when the day came on for the voyage, Mr. Morris had the boiler raised from the deck of the packet, and carefully lowered into the river. There were dense crowds on the quays and on the two bridges. To the astonishment of the greater part of these, the iron boiler really did swim, neither did its buoyancy appear to be affected in the least when Mr. Morris got into the man-hole and stood there calmly surveying the assembled multitude. A boat with four men at the oars tackled on in front to do the towing, and the strange procession began. Nobody needs to be told nowadays that a boiler will float, if only it is of the proper shape; but in the second decade of the nineteenth century people were not at all familiar with the miracles in naval architecture that were in store for their children, and they were mightily enthusiastic over the "discovery" of their clever townsman. It is hardly necessary to say that the boiler stood the test, that Mr. Morris won his bet, that Bonaparte's heart was glad, and that there was a universal concensus of opinion that wonders would never cease.

One of the best-known figures on the quayside of Ayr for many a day was Captain John Lyon of the *Village Pride*. A typical sailor of the old school was the skipper. Big, powerfully

built, inured to the sea from his youth up, self-possessed, and suggestive in his gait and his conversation of the salt water that was so long his home, many a year he traded in and out of Ayr. The *Village Pride* was a brig; and a brig, as every old sailor knows, was a vessel of a superior class to a brigantine or a schooner. She was square-rigged on both of her masts, and more reminiscent of the deep seas. The *Village Pride* was in the Irish trade, and for long she voyaged to and from Cork, taking coals on the outward run and bringing limestone home. She had thus the opportunity, when she got down off the Tuscar, of meeting the long swell of the western ocean; and, blow high, blow low, the skipper never shirked his duty. He had unbounded faith in the old brig, and handled her like a boat, and she came to be associated with him in the mind of everybody who made it his business to mark the coming and going of the coasters. But before Captain Lyon had risen to the dignity of a master mariner, he had seen foreign parts, and he had experienced misadventures that made him an object of interest to the general community.

In 1858, Captain Lyon was one of the crew of a steamer, the *Earl of Carrick*, that sailed regularly between Ayr and Liverpool. The *Earl of Carrick*, was a screw steamer of three

hundred tons burden; none too big a vessel for a steady, all-the-year run on a stormy route such as that which falls to be navigated between the mouth of the river and the entrance to the Mersey. But she was staunch, she was well sailed, and she made her runs with conspicuous regularity. Her master was a Liverpool man, a Captain Allenby, a careful and experienced seaman, and many a wild day she went to sea when it would have been no reflection on the courage of the skipper had he elected to wait in port till the weather moderated.

The *Earl of Carrick* was advertised to leave Ayr on Friday, 21st December, 1858. Friday was one of her regular days for sailing, but that particular Friday it was blowing very hard, a heavy sea was running outside, and the skipper made up his mind to wait till the Saturday. The gale moderated, or at least lulled, on the Saturday, and the vessel sailed. By the time she was on the Harbour bar the seas were breaking over her, and she caught it very rough all the way along. It was soon dark, it was very cold, and in the flying spray, the difficulty of looking ahead, and the veering of the ship as the waves knocked her about, she got off her course. John Lyon had gone below at eight bells—four o'clock—in the morning, but as the storm got worse, he returned on deck an

hour later, and just then the master discovered that he was in dangerous proximity to the land. "Bear a hand, men," he said, "or the ship will be on the shore." The belief was that they were off the Point of Ayr, a headland on the coast of the Isle of Man, but it proved to be the Calf of Man on which they were driving; and Lyon, realising where they were, ordered the helmsman to put the helm to port, so as to make for the open sea. The master countermanded the order just as the vessel was answering her wheel, with the result that she was steered right in on the land. Somebody had given the engineer instructions to stop the engines, and this had been done; but they were re-started, full speed astern, and everything was done to get the *Earl of Carrick* out of the dangerous position in which, too late, she was seen to be. The sea and the wind were very tempestuous, and they took charge of the straining ship, and in about five minutes from the time when Captain Lyon had come on deck, she struck on a low reef of rocks that runs out to sea at that point.

It was at once recognised that escape was next door to out of the question, for the waves lifted the ship up and dashed her down again on the rock, and after half an hour of that cruel bumping on the reef she parted in two. Every effort was made to launch one of the boats, and as soon as

the davits were swung outwards and the boat was ready for lowering, the ship's stewardess and the boy were got into it, and orders were given to lower away. By some means the head of the boat was lowered much faster than the stern, the boy fell out, and was swept out of sight in an instant, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the stewardess was got hold of as she was in the act of falling, and dragged on board again. The sea was making a clean breach of the vessel, and the ill-fated persons, clinging to whatever they could get hold of for bare life, were benumbed with the cold; and when one furious breaker deluged them, three of them could no longer hang on, and they were carried into the deep never to be seen again. Captain Lyon described the cries of the lessening group of unfortunates as heart-rending. Campbell, the second engineer, complained bitterly of the cold, and Captain Lyon gave him a coat and encouraged him the best way he could to hold on. But as the condition of the wreck grew worse and worse, he made up his mind to swim for it, and he and another seaman, James Watt, threw off their oilskins and heavy jackets and sea-boots and prepared for the struggle that awaited them in the angry sea. When daylight came in they could see a crowd of people on the rocks on shore, and, taking encouragement from their

presence, Captain Lyon resolved to leave. As he bade good-bye to his wretched companions he remarked: "We are all in God's hands; let us not perish without a struggle." A passenger, Captain Paton, who had for years commanded the Liverpool packet, said: "If you reach the shore, give my love to my wife and daughter. I am an old man and am not able to make the attempt." Just then a big wave washed Captain Lyon off the wreck, he and other three men; and a succession of seas dashed over them. When these had passed, the other three men were nowhere to be seen, and Captain Lyon, who was a splendid swimmer, begun a forty minutes' struggle with the elements. As he neared the rocks a life-line was thrown to him, and he missed it; but a second throw was more successful, and he managed to scramble up on to the reef. His trials, however, were by no means over. There was still what he described as a gully to be crossed, and as he was in the middle of it the line parted, and he was caught in the race of a strong current, and was in great danger of being carried out to sea again. But just as he was being swept out of the gully into the open water, a strong hand was laid upon him, and he was dragged ashore, exhausted, faint, battered, but alive. Here, to his surprise, he found that James Watt had preceded him, but

less fortunate than he, Watt had been dashed upon the rocks and had sustained severe bodily injuries which necessitated his being kept in hospital for some considerable time. With the exception of these two, all the rest were lost.

When the news came to Ayr, it created no little sensation. "Vessel bottom up," the first telegram ran; "only two seamen saved." Thus eleven persons had gone down to a watery grave, and there were eight widows and thirty orphans, mostly in Ayr, left to mourn their loss. The public were characteristically kind, and subscribed liberally for their support. In place of the *Earl of Carrick*, the *Emerald*, a vessel of about the same size and build, was put upon the run, and for a while she made the passage with great regularity; but she too came to grief off the Isle of Man, and consigned a number of persons to a watery grave. But a second time Captain Lyon was among the saved, and he lived to weather many dangers and many storms, and to end his days, at an advanced age, in his own bed at home.

It was always a big day down the quay when the Arran boats came in for the Midsummer Fair. The Arran folks came both to sell and to buy. They had cattle with them—rough Highland "nowt," fit for fattening; potatoes also, and fish; and large crowds used to congregate to

see them sail up the Harbour and land their cargoes at the quay walls. These days the tide-waiters, the gaugers, were much in evidence; for it was common notoriety that the Arranites were great in "peat reek," a delectable concoction of the wine of the land distilled amid the solitudes of the island mountains.

One of those midsummer days there sailed up the Harbour a little fishing-boat loaded full up with potatoes. Whether the tide-waiters were acting on private information, or whether their experience in such matters had made them suspicious, or whether it was a lucky hit they made, matters not; what interests now in the telling is that they boarded the craft as she came to at the Ratton Quay, and before the fishermen had time to take the sail off her. The Arranites were much taken aback, but they were wise with the wisdom of the serpent. The wind was blowing down the Harbour. One of them said a few words in the Gaelic tongue to the other, and straightway the painter (as the rope is called by which a boat is moored to the shore) was cut, the boat's head was pushed off, and, the wind filling the sails, the obedient little craft went round like a duck and headed away for the Harbour bar. The tide-waiters were wroth. They called to the fishermen to stay, but the men did not understand English, and

even when they were commanded to obey in the sacred name of the King, they held on all the same. The gaugers raised their voices to the land, but the crowds only laughed, and there was no voice in response, neither any that regarded. So away to sea they went, the crowd ashore watching their involuntary voyaging, much amused; and, the wind being on the side of the smugglers, the boat passed into the horizon. Later in the day a fishing-boat brought the gaugers back, and it is said that, for many a day afterwards, they were deeply offended if anybody asked them how they enjoyed their trip.

Romance and the sea cannot well be separated, even in those unromantic days when steam has obtained the mastery on the ocean, and the iron coasters go to and fro with the mechanical regularity of express trains. There was a very dull, dour sky overhead the other day when I was standing on the pier-head at Ayr, and a heavy sea was running on the bar. At sea nothing was to be seen but breakers and gulls, a black cormorant fishing, and a little flight of ducks barely clear of the billows. The scene was lonely. Up the Harbour, against the Newton quay wall, lay a tramp steamer, a three-master, funnel far aft and well raked, and her bow high out of the water; the ordinaryest kind of tramp,

iron all, dead like, and dirty with the coal dust from the cargo she had been taking aboard. She blew her whistle and then hauled off from the side, and I saw she was coming down the river. But, under weigh, she was alive, her stem cutting the water, the smoke trailing from her funnel, her propeller churning the depths, her bow gently lifting to the swell that was running up the Harbour. There was a man on the forecastle head, and the skipper was on the bridge, and both of them were shining in oilskins, and their sou'-westers were drawn down and tucked under their chins. The bar was waiting on her, long, swinging, crested seas, and deep troughs between them, and the spray flying; and the cormorant was fishing amid it all, with a free run of the depths all to himself.

The old tramp looked quite stately as she came down the river; she seemed to move by volition, and all she required was a turn or two of the wheel to port and then a turn or two to starboard to steady her. And then all at once she put her nose across the bar, and the master rang full speed ahead, and she whistled good-bye to a man ashore, and dashed into it. The big seas travel in threes, and there were three beauties waiting. She took the first bluff on her bows, the second caught her as she dipped into the trough of the waves, and the third drenched her fore and aft;

and then she was out in the middle of it all, a lonely ship on a restless sea, plunging and diving, and taking the green water aboard ; checked and staggering, and holding on her course, entered for a six or seven hours' wrestle with the rolling billows between the Harbour bar and the mouth of Belfast Loch. Tramp and all as she was, she was a picture for an artist, and an embodiment of man's mastery over the elements. She pounded away, all the while getting smaller and smaller, and very soon she was but a speck on the waste of waters. And when she had gone, the dark cormorant fished on, finding his food in the depths, where no roar of sea could trouble him, and where the storm hardly sufficed to ruffle the calm of his feeding-ground.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS ON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It was in the middle of the eighteenth century that a new life began to pulsate in Scotland. Up till then, and notably in Ayrshire, agriculture had been in an almost inconceivably backward condition. According to Colonel Fullarton of Fullarton, who wrote, in 1793, and who was an unusually acute observer, "the farm-houses were hovels moated with clay, the dunghill at the door, the cattle starving, and the people wretched." The live stock had a sorry time of it. "The starved cattle kept on the fields were suffered to poach the fields from the end of harvest till the ensuing seed-time. Starved through winter, hardly able to rise without aid in spring, and perpetually harassed during summer (they) never were in fit condition for the market."

As for the people themselves, they were coarsely clad. Their staple diet was porridge, oatmeal cakes, and sour milk and cheese. Butcher meat was so rare a luxury that in Ayr, with its 5,000 people, one bullock sufficed for a week's consumption, while in the rural parts, it was only on

high days and holidays that the people were able to vary their wearisome round of vegetarianism. The landlords, as a rule, were hard up; "indeed, when a laird wished to raise money, he was obliged to sell his property, perhaps for twenty years' purchase, or accept loans on wadset; the nature of the obligation being that if the money was not repaid within a specified time, the land became the property of the lender." Save in Kilmarnock, where they made carpets, and in Stewarton, where the weavers wove bonnets, the shire had no manufactures, and the harbours—Ayr, Irvine, Saltcoats—were shallow, silted up, and managed without enterprise. The best agricultural lands were let for two or three shilings an acre, and were quite dear enough at the money. There were people living in 1750 who remembered the great famine with which the century opened, when actual starvation was abroad in Ayrshire, when those who could fled the scene of suffering and gaunt desolation, when "the poor people had not infrequently been obliged to subsist by bleeding their cattle and mixing the blood so procured with what oatmeal they could procure."

With the turning of the century, however, came a change. Elsewhere in Scotland the spirit of improvement and of new birth was in the air. In the Lothians notably agriculture had

made vast strides, and in England the farmers were a long way ahead of their fellows in the West of Scotland. Fortunately for Ayrshire there were men who knew the signs of the times, and what the county ought to do. They realised that it was relatively falling back as compared with some of the other counties in Scotland, and they set about to bring their farmers and their estates into line with farmers and estates elsewhere. Chief of these far-seeing ones was the Earl of Eglinton, the possessor of a large estate in one of the most improvable parts of the county. From Haddingtonshire he brought an eminent farmer—Mr. Wight, of Ormiston—who introduced the proper modes of ploughing, levelling ridges, fallowing, drilling, turnip husbandry, and rotations of crops. The Earl gave special attention to improving the breed of horses and cattle, and he brought farm servants and dairy people, skilled in the newer methods, from various parts of England. Fences were erected, the land was cleaned and drained, and the country was beautified by plantations, clumps, and belts of trees. Means were taken to open up communications for butter and cheese with the towns and more populous centres of the shire, and with Glasgow, Greenock, Paisley, and other places furth of the bounds. This, in its turn, led to better dairying and more cleanly conditions of

byres and milk-houses. Banks were opened to meet the demand for money. Over the county generally there was a resolve to pursue the pathway of improvement, and every here and there individual landowners exerted themselves to restore the waste places and to make fat the comparatively desolate fields.

One of these was the Rev. Mr. Steele of Gadgirth, who records, in a wealth of detail, after what fashion he strove to bring his land into condition. It was in 1740 that he became proprietor. Looking back to that period, he tells in 1777 how terribly impoverished his fields had then become. "As to the grounds," he writes somewhat pathetically, "which had been scratched and scourged by the tenants before I came to the possession of it (*i.e.*, the estate), they were such poor hungry objects, and so cursed for the sake of their former persecutors, as made me despair of ever rousing them into a state of vigour and fertility, for even resting did them little or no good." By repeated ploughings and manurings, none the less, the reverend proprietor reinduced fertility to the soil, and at the same time he earned the blessing that is vouchsafed to the man who planteth a tree. Even in his old age he was concerned for his trees. Not much time had he even to put on paper the record of his own experience, for (he closes his interesting

story) "having litttle time for speculation, I must proceed to practise and do with all my might what my hands find to do, as I am coming down while my trees are coming up."

Tree culture and land improvement were also the employment of the Earl of Dumfries and his wife. The Countess is described as "a substitute who leaves nothing undone," and "the best assistant that ever blessed a man who delights in improvements." They drained, they planted trees, they shut up the overflowing Lugar within its banks, changed the whole system of agriculture on the Dumfries estate, and nourished the woollen manufactures of Cumnock. They had much to contend with, ignorance and prejudice, and a rooted antipathy to change, but they held on their way and had their reward.

Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran was another man who did the work that lay to his hands, and who lived to see the fruits of his labour. Here is his own modest testimony: "With regard to this part of the country, if you never was in it before, you would no doubt observe much in general to find fault with—a great deal of land uncultivated, and the culture of other parts very imperfect. But if you had been here some years ago, and compare the state it was then in with that in which it is now, you cannot fail to have remarked a very great alteration. To me, who

remember this country when there was scarce an enclosure in it but some few round the gentlemen's houses, when there was not a pound of grass seed sown in it from one end of it to the other, and when the whole attention of the farmer, and the whole dung of the farm, were applied to a few acres, while the rest was totally neglected, the difference is very striking." Apparently, Sir Adam Fergusson had some trouble to persuade his tenants to march with him along the highway of improvement. Not one of them "had made himself so remarkable as deserved being particularly mentioned"; nevertheless, he adds: "I can say in general that there is a remarkable alteration for the better, both in their knowledge and management, since I began to attend to country affairs."

Drongan estate was still another specially early scene of agricultural advancement, as also was Newfield, where, in the days of Colonel Fullarton, or very shortly after them—certainly within the first decade of the nineteenth century, a farm of 140 acres was let at 27s. 6d. per acre, a remarkable change, surely, from the two or three shillings per acre of half a century earlier!

The Ayrshire Bank

The landowners, as has been already said, began the era of improvement for the most part

sadly devoid of capital. They, or their predecessors, had exhausted the money-raising value of their properties, and they found it very difficult to obtain money for the draining of their fields, the building of houses, and the hundred and one things that were necessary to be done if the estates were to be brought up to date. There were minerals to be developed in coal and iron, and possibilities in manufactures were opening out that promised a speedy and a rich return, and the one thing needful in these days of a commercial spring was money.

This money was largely found by the Ayrshire Bank, an institution that grew like Jonah's gourd, that advanced money broadcast and without security, that was managed without discretion, that involved in its fall many of its shareholders in ruin, that staggered the shire in its collapse, and that yet evolved good out of the evil it wrought all over the county, and indeed over a great part of Scotland beside.

The history of "Douglas, Heron & Co., bankers, in Air," is worth the telling. It was on the 1st day of January, 1772, that "an abstract of the contract of co-partnery of the banking company established 1769," was registered in the books of Session. The opening paragraph in the abstract was as follows :—"We, the persons afternamed and designed and hereunto subscribing,

considering that the business of banking, when carried on on proper principles, is of great public utility, particularly to the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of a country, at the same time that it may yield a reasonable profit to the bankers concerned in it; and likewise considering the necessity there is in the present situation of the country that a banking company should be erected on proper principles at this juncture, have therefore resolved to establish a banking company upon a solid, creditable, and respectable footing; that is to say, in consideration of the mutual trust and confidence we repose in one another, we have agreed, and by these presents do hereby covenant and agree, to unite and join ourselves into a society or company for carrying on a joint trade and business of banking, for issuing notes of hand payable at our office; lending money on cash accounts, bills, or permanent securities; for purchasing bills of exchange, and discounting inland bills on notes; all under the firm, name, and designation of Douglas, Heron & Company, bankers in Air, and that for twenty years on and after the 6th of November, 1769, which is hereby declared to be the time of the commencement of this co-partnery; during which space, at least so long as the company shall subsist, we bind and oblige ourselves mutually, severally, and

respectively, to promote the true interests of the company to the utmost of our powers."

Following this Abstract were the names of the shareholders, with the amounts subscribed or promised, opposite to their names. The list is too long for quotation; but the names subjoined can hardly fail, from various points of view, to be interesting:—

Charles, Duke of Queensberry and Dover -	£2,000
Henry, Duke of Buccleuch - - -	1,000
Patrick, Earl of Dumfries - - - -	1,000
William, Earl of March and Ruglen - -	500
The Hon. Archibald Douglas of Douglas, Esq.	2,000
William Douglas, younger of Kelhead -	1,000
Patrick Heron, Esq., of Heron - - -	1,000
James Fergusson, Esq., of Craigdarroch -	500
Capt. Basil Heron, North British Dragoons	500
William Boyd Robertson of Trochrig -	500
Archibald Crawford of Ardmillan - -	1,000
Rev. John Steele of Gadgirth - - -	500
—— The same, afterwards, other - -	500
Robert Fergusson of Castlehill - - -	1,000
Hugh Logan of Logan - - - - -	1,000
Adam Craufurd Newall of Polquhan - -	500
William Logan of Camlarg - - -	1,000
Jas. Wilson, jun., merchant in Kilmarnock	500
Hugh Parker, merchant there - - -	500
David Maclure, merchant in Air - -	1,000
Alexander Fergusson, yr. of Craigdarroch -	1,000
William Hay of Crawfordston, W.S. - -	500
Alex. Orr of Waterside, W.S. - - -	1,000
Quintin Macadam in Barleith - - -	1,000
Bruce Campbell, Esq., at Sornbeg - -	500
Thomas Wallace, merchant in Cumnock -	500

David Fergusson, Provost of Air - -	£500
John Murdoch, writer in Air - - -	1,000
John Fergusson of Greenvaille - - -	1,000
Patrick Douglas, surgeon in Air - -	500
James Macadam of Waterhead - - -	500
Robert Whiteside, merchant in Air - -	500
John Sutherland, merchant in Cumnock -	500
William Wallace of Sauchie, advocate -	1,000
Robert Kennedy of Pinmore - - -	500
Capt. John Kelso of Dankeith - - -	500

The total sum originally subscribed was £96,000, which, said the Abstract, "with £54,000 not yet subscribed, making in whole £150,000, we declare is at present the capital stock intended for carrying on the aforesaid business of banking, but which capital may be increased if found necessary."

There was enormous wealth at the back of the bank, which, it has been said, was based "on the fatal delusion that because the capital and property of its proprietors was beyond question, it might therefore issue notes to any extent without depreciation." It was a project, says Robert Heron, in his "Observations made on a Journey through the Western Counties of Scotland in the Autumn of 1792," "hastily conceived and eagerly entered into. The proprietors were obliged to abandon everything to the conduct of the directors, and the directors, I believe, necessarily left too much to the servants

of the company. Many of the subscribers were little able to pay up in due time the shares for which they had subscribed. Instead of thinking of the obligations they had come under to answer the demands for their shares, they thought only of the command of credit and of paper-money which they had thus obtained, considering it an addition to their fortunes which might enable them to lavish any expense they should choose on projects of trade or of improvement of lands, or on splendour and extravagance of luxury in their style of living. The accountants and other servants of the bank thought it necessary to live as if they had already acquired prodigious fortunes. I have heard," adds Heron, "that, by the knavery of the same servants, a great part of the notes issued by the bank were twice debited for once they were credited in its accounts. In short, by a train of knavery, folly, and mismanagement, the bustle and the extravagant promises of this bank terminated in bankruptcy. It turned out a bubble, like that of the Mississippi Company in France, and of the South Sea Company in England."

In three years this concern, starting under auspices that were unquestionably favourable, ran its reckless course to financial disaster. The conductors advanced money to landowners in every direction. These improved their land with

it in many instances; in others, they squandered it; but even where the land was improved, there was no corresponding return, and a run of bad weather, and consequent bad seasons, helped to bring about a crisis. But the landowners were not alone responsible for the crash. The directors of the Bank of England checked the currency of the bank's bills because it was affirmed, in their opinion, the bank was "using good credit for bad purposes, and creating a fictitious credit on artificial paper in support of real estate or effects." The direction of the concern was said, moreover, "to be too much in the command of petty lawyers, called writers or attorneys, and those who, either directly or indirectly, were concerned in smuggling, and who, by such advantages, were enabled to enter into large enterprises and speculations of that kind, and to carry on fabricated accommodations in the bill way to the prejudice of every species of fair trade and the discredit of all who connived at or were concerned in such gambling practices."

When the crash came, and the bank closed its doors, the sensation was great and the suffering widespread and general. At each successive call on the shareholders, estates came into the market. Many old properties that had been in the possession of the same families for generations changed hands. Men that were comparatively well-to-do,

and even opulent one day, were impoverished the next. Persons who had staked their all with Douglas, Heron & Co. awoke to find themselves beggared. Litigations followed upon liquidations, and although in the end the creditors of the bank were paid in full, that result was not accomplished save at great personal cost and suffering.

It is an ill wind, however, that blows nobody good, and looking back now over more than one hundred and thirty years to the panic begotten of the collapse of the Ayr Bank, it may be doubted whether, after all, the good achieved did not quite counterbalance the evil that was wrought. With the wealth so freely disgorged by the obliging bankers, new houses were built, gardens and ornamental grounds were laid out, and estates were improved and cultivated. "Clumps of wood," says Heron, "were scattered over the knolls, belts were stretched along the edges of the lawn, the water was taught here to stagnate into pools, and there to wind with an artificially meandering course. The strata of limestone were quarried and burnt; the beds of coal were opened up; skilful farmers were invited hither from Berwickshire and from England. Kyle and Cuninghame were opened up by roads in every direction, and the middle of the northern districts of Ayrshire soon came to exhibit nothing but one continued series of towns, villages,

ornamented farm-houses, villas, and palaces, divided by fields upon which taste had superinduced almost every suitable ornament, while enlightened industry had called forth all their fertility." Then the purchase of some of the estates that came into the market with the fall of the bank by wealthy men, some of whom had made their money in India, introduced to the shire a new class of aspirant gentry who were not afraid to spend, while, at the same time, the development of manufactures and of minerals had given new life to districts where aforetime there was stagnation. The county staggered under the shock of the banking disaster, but it was not very long in recovering; other and sounder banking concerns took up the financing of Ayrshire on better and more assured principles, and long before the century had closed, the effects of the Douglas, Heron & Co. misfortune had all but disappeared.

Heron, whom we have already quoted, travelled through the county from south to north. Everywhere he found prosperity, everywhere something to charm him. Other travellers were hardly less enthusiastic. In the *Weekly Magazine* or *Edinburgh Amusement* of 1772, an anonymous contributor records his impressions of Ayr and the country adjacent. Of Ayr itself, architecturally, he entertained a very poor opinion, but in the

country adjacent "a change has been effected within these seven years more extraordinary than all the metamorphoses of Ovid. Instead of bare, barren, and open lands, where the hand of the husbandman was scarcely discernible, you have fruitful, well-cultivated fields, and wherever you cast your eye the busy hand of industry is at work. There fields, in the gayer months of summer and the joyous season of autumn, present a prospect that creates rapture and real delight." Some of this possibly may have to be taken with a grain of salt, but, making ample allowance for a fair margin of romancing, there is no room to doubt that the Ayrshire of 1770 was an enormous improvement on the Ayrshire of twenty years previous. The sleep was at an end, and the giant refreshed had awakened.

The Starving Dominies

The day had not yet dawned, however, for the poor dominie. In the second session of the first Parliament of William and Mary (1690) it was enacted "that there be a school and schoolmaster in every parish; his fee not under an hundred marks nor above two hundred; to be paid by the heritors and life-renters in the parish, to have recourse for the half off their tenants; and that letters be therefore directed with the same privileges as to suspensions with ministers'

stipends." A mark Scots was equal to one shilling and a penny-halfpenny; the best paid schoolmasters were certificated, therefore, in £11 5s. a year, and the very poorest could not fall below £5 12s. 6d. In the days of William and Mary these sums were by no means insufficient for the ordinary necessities of the ordinary dominie, but a hundred years later the cost of living had increased so enormously that the £45 of the latter period was not regarded as worth more than the £15 of the former; and the plight of the parish schoolmasters had become so wretched all over Scotland that they were crying out in that they were lacking the bare necessities of existence. In many cases, indeed, the schoolmaster was able to add to his income by the performance of certain parochial duties, and at Candlemas he was in the habit of receiving gifts from the school children; but on the other hand, it was not infrequently the custom for the heritors to parcel out the salary in fractions of about threepence or fourpence among thirty or forty tenants, and to leave the master to extort it from these in the best way that he could. "In Scotland there are at present" (1799), says a contributor to the Statistical Account, "more than five hundred schoolmasters on the legal establishment, none of whom receive above £16 sterling a year, including every emolument and perquisite

annexed to their office." The wretched estate of the instructors of youth, so far as the great body of them were concerned, is even more forcibly put in "A Memorial drawn up for the Parochial Schoolmasters in Scotland, anno 1782." "Suppose, then," the Memorial runs, "that in Scotland there are 900 parochial schoolmasters, which is very near the truth, 800 of these will be found struggling with indigence,, inferior in point of income to 800 day-labourers in the best cultivated part of the island, and receiving hardly half the emoluments of the menial servants of country gentlemen and wealthy citizens." A sorry enough picture, surely, of how Scotland, then, as now, one of the best educated countries in Europe, treated the men who were responsible for the scholastic training of its youth.

It will give a lively picture of the straits to which the dominie, his wife and children, were subjected if we annex from the first Statistical Account this "table of the expenses of a common labourer with a wife and four children":

House rent, with a small garden - -	£1	0	0
Peats, or fuel - - - - - -	0	6	0
A working jacket and breeches, about -	0	5	0
Two shirts 6s., a pair of brogues 3s., two pair of stockings 2s. - -	0	11	0
A hat 1s., a handkerchief 1s. 6d. -	0	2	6

A petticoat, bedgown, shift, and caps for the wife - - - - - -	0	9	0
A pair of stockings 1s., brogues 2s. 6d., apron 1s. 6d., napkin 1s. 6d. -	0	6	6
A shirt 2s., brogues 2s., stockings 1s., for each of the four children - -	1	0	0
Other clothes for the children, about 4s. each - - - - - -	0	16	0
School wages, etc., for the children -	0	10	0
Two stone of oatmeal per week at 1s. 8d. per stone - - - -	8	13	4
Milk 9d. per week, butter 3d. per ditto	2	12	0
Salt, candle, thread, soap, etc. - -	0	13	0
Tear and wear of the man's and wife's Sunday clothes - - - -	0	10	0
	£17	14	4

Comment on the schoolmaster's condition is hardly necessary; the wonder is, not that inferior men, socially, morally, educationally, became schoolmasters, as they undoubtedly did in too many cases, but that men were found to pursue the avocation of teacher at such a miserable pittance at all.

On the whole, the emoluments of the dominies in Ayrshire were probably more than the £16 referred to, but at best they constituted over all a wretched pittance. In Riccarton the fixed salary was but £5 12s. 6d., in addition to which the master had 1s. 6d. a quarter for teaching English, 2s. for writing, and 2s. 6d. for arithmetic, and it is doubtful whether he

even attained to the £16 that meant genteel starvation for the poor dominie. In Symington the income did not exceed, from all sources, £23; in St. Quivox it was about £24, besides a good house and garden. The parish schoolmaster of Tarbolton luxuriated in about £50 a year, and, being a man of erudition, he instructed his pupils in Latin. In Mauchline, where "the Scots dialect was the language spoken," albeit it was "gradually improving and approaching nearer to the English," the fixed salary was £10. The salary of the Muirkirk master was £7 15s., besides a free house and garden, and his whole emoluments might amount to about £30 per annum. He of Sorn "had no garden, but he had a school and dwelling-house, both among the most wretched that were to be found in any cultivated country." His salary was £8 6s. 8d., and the school fees were: for reading, 1s. 6d.; reading and writing, 2s. 6d.; writing and arithmetic, 3s. per quarter. He had from five-and-twenty to thirty pupils, and his income, including his emoluments as session-clerk, amounted to about £20. The school in Ochiltree is described as having been in a flourishing condition; but the salary was only £8 sterling, and, as there was "also a private school or two," it is to be feared that the parochial schoolmaster had not his troubles to seek.

The Maybole schoolmaster had a fixed salary of no less than 300 merks, or £16 17s. 6d.; and as he no doubt exacted fees as well in the "old mean thatched house" that was his school, and that was so "very unsuitable to the eminent characters which at different times had been educated in it," it may be taken for granted that his lot was an enviable one to his poorer brethren of the rural parts. In the adjacent parish of Kirkmichael the teacher had but "a pitiful 100 merks, paid by many different hands," and his brother in office in Kirkoswald had the same "by far too small" income, which he eked out by acting as precentor and session-clerk, and by exacting fees from the scholars. The Straiton man had also the same wretched minimum, and no teacher thought it worth his while to stay long, with the result that there was "a very rapid succession of schoolmasters, to the great detriment of the parish." In Dailly the income rose to nearly £30 from all sources, session-clerkship included, and the regular curriculum of the school included English, Latin, French, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping. The schoolmaster of Girvan, session-clerk and precentor as well, realised about the same income, £30, and he too added the teaching of Latin "to the three R's." In Colmonell the dominie was paid the minimum salary of £5 12s. 6d.,

but he had £8 as well from a "mortification," and probably fees in addition, so that, as things went, he was no doubt fairly well-to-do. Ballantrae was good for no less than about £40, and in consequence there was generally a well-qualified schoolmaster, "able to teach the languages and the several branches of education fitting for business."

Irvine was a recognised centre for the higher education, and the rector and his assistants were paid by salary and fees combined, and realised, no doubt, very comfortable incomes. The rector had sometimes as many as five-and-twenty boarders, and, before the American War of Independence, he was in the habit of receiving boys from America and the West Indies. The war proved detrimental to the school, but the character of the education imparted was nevertheless kept at the same high level, and in due time the fortunes of the school revived. The schoolmaster's fixed salary in Stevenston was "scarcely £5 yearly," and the minister thought it ought to be augmented; the scholars numbered about fifty, and as their fees would not realise more than about £12 a year, it may be taken for granted that he had a sore struggle to maintain his position in life. Things were also in a sorry state in Ardrossan. The teacher of 1793 had been forty-two years in office. He had started

life with a college education, could teach the dead languages, and was versed in geometry, trigonometry, and navigation, in the last of which he had proved himself very successful, but his official salary was no more than £6 3s. 4d. sterling, and his other emoluments and fees were "very low." In Kilwinning the fixed salary of the schoolmaster was £9 9s., which, with the school fees and other emoluments, made the office worth about £25 a year. The master, however, had no house as an appendage to his office, and had altogether a sorry time of it. The minister, an exceptionally enlightened man in many respects, was thoroughly alive to the dangers of underpaid and indigent instructors of youth. "To the disgrace of a liberal and enlightened age," he says, "these men have been most amazingly neglected. . . . A common tradesman or day-labourer, if sober and industrious, will earn a great deal more than the generality of schoolmasters can possibly do." And, should there be no improvement, he looks forward with fear to the time when the schools "will be filled with persons wretchedly ignorant or of grossly indecent and immoral lives," with consequences "too painful to be dwelt upon to the rising generation."

The Woman clothed with the Sun and the Moon

We do not, as a rule, associate the end of the eighteenth century with emotionalism in religion. The religion of that day was not after that sort. The fathers, looking to them across the many years, seem to us in the distance to have been douce, sober, steady-going Presbyterians, Calvinistic and orthodox; some of them Burghers, some of them anti-Burghers, some of them of the Relief, the large majority of them State Churchmen; not given to change for its own sake; rigid and faithful to a degree and beyond that which is written nowadays; controversialists and hair-splitters after the Scottish order; not seekers after strange doctrines or worshippers of strange gods. And yet it was among these same fathers in Israel, descendants of the Covenanters of Ayrshire, and in the ancient, honoured town of Irvine, that one of the most remarkable heresies that ever deceived the faithful of this or of any other country ran its course.

The last of the Buchanites was Andrew Innes, and he lived on until the middle of last century, nor died until he had told his story to one who forthwith put it on record. A Buchanite he continued firm and faithful to the end, a believer in

one of the most audacious and rank impostors that ever lived; a woman who pretended to be the Third Person in the Godhead incarnate, who managed to seduce from his Calvinism the Relief minister of Irvine, and acclaimed him the Man-Child of Revelation and herself his spiritual mother, who persuaded a large company of people to journey with her to Zion, and who actually imbued them with the belief that she would translate the whole of them to heaven without tasting of death.

Elspeth, or Elspath, Simpson was the child of poor parents, and her early years in Banffshire were spent in poverty. She had a natural aversion to manual labour, and when circumstances brought her to the South-West of Scotland, she associated with evil company, and contracted those loose notions of matrimony that played so prominent a part in the faith of which she was the founder. She is said to have married a working potter of Ayr, named Robert Buchan, but of this there is no record in the parish papers. She lived but a short time with her husband, who, shocked with her immorality, took her back to Banffshire, where he left her to provide for herself as best she could. She had two daughters and a son, whom she scandalously neglected, "to carry out the details of a divine apocalypse" charging her with a heavenly mission. This was

in the year 1774. She remained in the North, warring with the clergy, discussing her as yet unformulated mission and spreading dispeace in the community ; but her manner of life was most offensive to those with whom she was connected, and she had very little success. She returned to her husband in Glasgow in 1781, and he received her cordially.

The Rev. Hugh White, minister of the Relief congregation of Irvine, was at this time one of the most popular preachers of his sect in the West of Scotland. In December of 1782 Mrs. Buchan heard him preach at a Sacrament in Glasgow, and being captivated with his oratory, she wrote to him as "one whom she loved in our sweet Lord Jesus Christ," and as "a promised seed actually born from above." Mr. White, though a man of some erudition, and beforetime a Professor of Logic in an American College, was exceedingly flattered by the compliments of his admirer, and in 1783 he invited her to Irvine, where she was well received by the Relief congregation, and where her heavenly conversation and extraordinary gifts caused her to be regarded as a valuable acquisition to the party. When she left Irvine to return for a little to Glasgow she wrote to Mr. White, "her dear child," and hailed him as one chosen of God. Mr. White reciprocated her admiration of him, and declared her to

be a saint of no ordinary description, and the harbinger of a light that would unveil the darkness of Antichrist that had long overshadowed many lands. This was more than a section of his flock could stand, and they brought the matter before the Presbytery. His friends did all they could, partly for his own sake, and partly for the sake of his wife and two young children, but "Luckie Buchan," as she was familiarly called in Irvine, persuaded him to stand firm. This he did, and accordingly, in August, 1783, he was unanimously suspended by his co-Presbyters from the exercise of his ministerial functions.

Driven out of the Relief Church, Mr. White preached in his own house and in his garden, and several members of his old congregation rallied round him, including Peter Hunter, the Town Clerk, and John Gibson, a well-to-do builder. The people of the town, however, were alive to the scandal, and they angrily demanded that Mrs. Buchan should be expelled from the town. To this the Magistrates would not consent, and the mob took the matter into their own hands. They broke the doors and windows of Mr. Hunter's house, and when Mrs. Buchan, who was within, tried to escape they intercepted her. "After dragging her through all the streets of the town, nearly in a state of nudity, many were for ducking her in the river, but the majority

were for hounding her home to her husband to the sound of an old tin kettle, and they actually trailed her to Stewarton, a village eight miles distant from Irvine, on the road to Glasgow." "They would raise her up," according to the testimony of one of her friends, who followed in the hope of rescuing her from the hands of the crowd, "as high as they could, calling aloud for her to fly now to heaven like Enoch or Elijah, at the same time letting her drop to the ground, exclaiming: 'She cannot fly yet; we must take her a little further and try her again.' When they came to a bridge at Stewarton, they took her to the ledge for the purpose of throwing her into the river, and would have done so had not one of the party opposed them, saying: 'She has done us no personal harm, therefore we will not kill her outright—let her husband do that if he pleases when he gets her home.'" Mrs. Buchan managed to creep back to Irvine in a most pitiable plight—bareheaded, barefooted, with scarcely a rag to cover her nakedness, and covered with blood. Yet she was cheerful, and accepted persecution as the price she must pay for her convictions.

Fearful of further outrage, Mrs. Buchan, or Friend Mother, as her disciples now called her, was sent off to Glasgow, and thence to Muthill, in Perthshire, whence she wrote characteristic letters to her "dearest, dear" Man-Child, Mr.

White. "My body," she wrote in a postscript, "is loaded with a great cold, but my senses are like pipes of new wine, all running from a free fountain." The Man-Child followed her, but his reception in Muthill was so discouraging, as he openly exposed the errors of the Confession of Faith, that he returned with his spiritual mother to Irvine, where the riots began afresh, and whence the Magistrates decreed the expulsion of Mrs. Buchan on a two-hours' notice. What it was that specially excited the ire of the Irvine folks was the doctrine inculcated by Mrs. Buchan of having all things in common. She broke down the bonds of matrimony. She confessed the gift of the Holy Spirit, "with postures and practices," to quote the words of Robert Burns, "that are scandalously indecent." "When the Holy Ghost of God occupies all the person," she declared, "and reigns throughout the flesh, it matters not whether they marry or not. As for self-denial," she added, "it would not do with me to be self-denied, but even averse to self-denial." Withal, and notwithstanding these things, her disciples agreed to accompany their Friend Mother, and they departed from Irvine, "singing on the way to the New Jerusalem." Mrs. Buchan rode in a cart with Mr. White, "and often halted to lecture them on the loveliness of the land, and to cheer them with food from what she called the

garden of mercy, and with drink from a large cup called the comforter." All shared alike except Friend Mother, who, after she had divided the bread, "lighted her pipe and took a smoke of tobacco." The number of Buchanites at this period was forty-six.

By slow degrees, sleeping in barns or in public-houses, the party reached Thornhill, where they spent their first Sunday, and where Mr. White preached twice. The Magistrates of Irvine issued a fugæ warrant for the recovery of the Town Clerk, and sent a messenger-at-arms to bring him home. His wife and children continued with Friend Mother, and the whole party halted at the farm of New Cample, in Nithsdale, to await the return of Mr. Hunter and of one or two more of the enthusiasts who had accompanied him to Irvine to settle up their business, and some of whom, freed from the sorceries of the "witch woman," never made their appearance again among the New Jerusalemites. The tenant of New Cample would only make a temporary grant of an empty barn to the way-farers passing Zionward, but when he found they were good customers for his farm produce, that they paid ready money for all they got, and that they were not slothful in labouring on his fields, and that without reward, he not only let them remain till his crop was gathered in, but also

gave them ground to erect a house for themselves. This they did, and it went in the locality under the name of Buchan Ha'. Here Mr. White preached, and here, as subsequently in his "Divine Dictionary," he described Luckie Buchan as "the mysterious woman predicted in the Revelation, in whom the light of God was restored to the world, where it had not been since the ascension of Christ, but where it would now continue till the period of translation into the clouds to meet the Lord at His second coming." The folks at Closeburn, scandalised beyond measure at the conduct and pretensions of the Buchanites, gave them a taste of what Friend Mother called "the great red dragon's wrath," but without avail, and they not only held their ground, but enrolled a number of converts from England. Luckie Buchan and Mr. White had by this time led them all to believe that in a little time they would be taken bodily up into heaven, and they waited in faith on the hour of ascension. One night they heard what they took to be a great voice from the clouds. The children, accompanied by "our great luminary," struck up their favourite hymn—

> "O hasten translation and come resurrection;
> O hasten the coming of Christ in the air."

And there was a rushing together of the party

from every corner of the house. Mr. Hunter tumbled down the loft in his hurry, but instantly bounded from the ground crying, "Hasten translation." A scene of intense excitement and bodily agitation followed. The farmer came rushing in, determined to go up with the rest. All were ready for the aerial journey when Mrs. Buchan destroyed their hopes by telling them that she saw they were not yet ready for the change. Then "she called for a tobacco pipe and took a smoke." In the morning the floor of the apartment was found to be "strewed with watches, gold rings, and a great number of trinkets which had been, in the moment of expected translation, thrown away as useless in our expected country. My own watch," adds the chronicler, "was of the number. I never saw it more, but I afterwards learned that John Gibson, our treasurer, had collected all the watches and jewellery then thrown away, and sold them in Dumfries." The same authority averred that Friend Mother's face shone with the lustre of the Transfiguration, a proof that she was the Divine Person Mr. White represented her to be.

Luckie attributed the failure to ascend to a lack of faith, and ordained a fast of forty days and forty nights in order to prepare her followers for translation. To this ordeal the deluded

Buchanites consented, and for nearly six weeks, with the exception of Mrs. Buchan herself and Mr. White, they all but starved. Luckie allowed them no solid food. She gave them occasionally a little treacle mixed with hot water, and incredible as it may seem, it really appears as if this was all the nourishment they had. The appointed period having expired, Mrs. Buchan led her dupes to the top of Templand Hill about sunrise. What followed is described by a gentleman who chanced to pass the foot of the hill on horseback, and who stealthily crept up to witness the spectacle of fanaticism. "I recognised several faces that I had seen at Buchan Ha', particularly that of Luckie Buchan herself. She was raised nearly her whole length above the crowd by whom she was surrounded, who stood with their faces to the rising sun, and their arms extended upwards, as if to clasp the great luminary as he rose above the horizon." Afraid of being discovered, the observer retreated to a wayside inn at Brownhill, where he encountered the landlord and two Buchanites, who had played out when half-way through the part, and who were anxiously waiting to hear whether the ascension had taken place and they had been left behind. "A sentinel soon came running in with breathless haste with the news that Luckie and the whole band were on their way to New Cample. We all hastened to see

them retrace their steps to their wonted abode; and such a company of half-famished looking creatures I never saw before. They were all deadly pale and emaciated to the last degree; they seemed like living skeletons just eloped from the grave, or newly imported from Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, with the exception of Luckie herself. She was like one of those beauties who crowd the canvas of painters with hillocks of rosy flesh. Her hair was unbound, and hung profusely over her back and shoulders."

The failure of the attempt to ascend shattered the faith of some of the Buchanites, and though Mrs. Buchan and the Man-Child remained steadfast, the movement made no further headway. Mrs. Buchan purified the remnant by a ceremony "too rude to meet an ear of modesty." There were rumours in the countryside, and some apparent ground for them too, that the Buchanites practised infanticide. To try to raise the fallen standard was an impossibility. The party had to leave New Cample and take up house and farm at Auchengibbert, and here they worked away a while under the active supervision of the Friend Mother. By this time, in 1791, she had reached the age of fifty-three years, but the hardships of her lot in life had told severely upon her, and she collapsed physically.

Mrs. Buchan died on the 29th of March, but

before she became speechless she called her little flock about her, reaffirmed that she was the Spirit of God, that Christ was her elder brother, and that she could not die. She might appear to do so, she added, but they were not to be discouraged, for she would only sleep. "If their faith was pure, without alloy, at the end of six days she would return for them, but if they remained faithless she would not return to take them to heaven till the end of ten years, when, if they still continued unprepared for the change, fifty years would elapse before she would reappear on earth; but she would then, at all events, descend to convince the faithless world of its error." Needless to say, she never awoke more. Mr. White and some of the more central figures in the story cut a hole in the roof of the barn in which she lay in state and pretended that she had risen. In reality, they opened a newly-made grave in the Kirkgunzeon Churchyard and laid her there; and later her remains were dug up by Andrew Innes, one of the faithful, and dutifully kept by him in his own house. Andrew saw the ten years go by, and the fifty also, and was much depressed at his Friend Mother's failure to return, but he continued true to her cause and memory till the end.

Mr. White recanted, and sailed again for America. A dozen or more of the Buchanites

consorted together at Crocketford, dying one by one, and in a few years the heresy was extinguished. And so ended one of the most extraordinary delusions that Christianity ever witnessed. That Mrs. Buchan was a woman of immoral life was undoubted. That she was possessed of unusual gifts and of great force of character is equally plain. The most wonderful thing of all is that she should have beguiled so many otherwise respectable and responsible douce Presbyterians in the very cradle-land of the Covenanters.

The Lifters and anti-Lifters

While these deluded Buchanites were thus endeavouring to scale the clouds and secure translation to heaven by fasting, prayer, and free love, a controversy of a peculiarly Scottish nature was agitating the Rev. David Smyton of Kilmaurs, and a few of his friends. It was not concerning the Burgher oath—that had already split the young Secession Church in twain—but regarding a matter that, in our day, would hardly be thought worth discussing by ordinary catholic-minded Presbyterians, but which nevertheless developed into what came to be known as the battle of the Lifters and the anti-Lifters. At the First Communion, according to

the Scriptures, "He took the bread and blessed it," and Mr. Smyton interpreted this literally to mean that, in the dispensation of the Sacrament, the bread should first be lifted before being blessed. As things were then, the minister was in the habit of asking a blessing on the bread before even he approached the table on which "the elements" were lying. This practice, Mr. Smyton argued, was uncanonical, and he sought to insist on having it declared by the Church that its ministers should first lift the bread and then invoke the Divine blessing on it. The whole point at issue was as to lifting or non-lifting at a certain early part of the solemnity. To Mr. Smyton it appeared of enormous importance, and, with that weakness for controversy not seldom found in Scotsmen, and that tendency, by no means confined to Scotsmen, to magnify mole-holes into mountains, he carried it to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod. He found support from four or five members of the high court of the Church, but the Church, as a whole, could not be got to see whether it was material that the bread should be lifted and laid down again before the blessing was asked upon it, and so the minister of Kilmaurs returned home unsatisfied, and more assured than ever in his own interpretation of duty. It is said that at his first Communion, after the Synod had dealt with him,

he himself forgot, or neglected, to lift the bread before blessing it; but however that may be, he persevered in urging his case to the point of being contumacious, and was actually suspended by the Synod from the ministry of the Church. Satisfied that he had the right on his own side, Mr. Smyton held on his way, but the controversy of which he was the father lacked the needful marrow to keep it going, and in the course of a few years it gradually fizzled out, and in due time, in 1789, this first of the Ayrshire Seceding ministers finished his course in peace.

The Early Days of Ayrshire Canals and Horse Railways

In these days of ours, when rapid transit abounds, and when, to all appearance, we are living on the eve of great developments in the art of abridging distance, it is not easy to understand altogether how the fathers managed to get along with their carriers' carts, their stage coaches, their canal boats, and their horse railways.

From the nature and contour of the countryside, there never were many canals in Ayrshire. The shire is not hilly, over large parts of its surface, as compared with other shires, but neither is it a flat land such as Holland is; a

land where the canal abounds, a feature in every typical landscape, and where it is as indispensable to the welfare of the country as the railways themselves are to Great Britain. Never at any time were there many artificial water-ways in the shire. As early as 1772, a canal of two miles and a half in length was opened from the collieries of Seabank and Ardeer to within 600 yards of the harbour of Saltcoats; and that it was a financial success was demonstrated to the colliery proprietors, by the very salient fact that it saved them not less than £1,000 a year, as compared with the earlier horse traffic by road. Muirkirk parish had also a canal for the transportation of metals to the ironworks, and a beginning had been made of a more pretentious undertaking from Tradeston to Ardrossan, the cost of which Telford, the celebrated engineer, estimated at £112,000, with an annual expenditure of £4,000, and an estimated revenue of £17,000. This venture was never completed; and that may have been due in some measure to the demonstrated calculations of a Mr. Joseph Wilkes, of Measham, who set his brains agoing concerning iron railways, and evolved something that seemed to be more practicable and much cheaper than artificial water carriage. Mr. Wilkes found that when the declivity of an iron railway was five-sixteenths of an inch per yard, a

horse of £20 value drew downward with ease 21 carriages or waggons containing a deadweight of 35 tons; that he drew 5 tons up the same aclivity, and that he drew 3 tons up a railway which rose one inch and a half per yard. A horse of £36 value drew 43 tons 8 cwt. down the same slope, and 7 tons up the road.

Once attention was directed to the superiority of the iron railway over the canal, one or two of the most enterprising and shrewd of the colliery proprietors betook themselves to the formation of railways. Mr. Oswald of Auchincruive constructed one from his coal-pits to near the town of Ayr, but failed to obtain liberty to carry the line through the town itself, and as far as the harbour. The iron company of Muirkirk formed a railroad a mile in length, and from the Newton coal-pits to the North Quay of Ayr, Mr. Taylor constructed another. But by far the most important of all was that made by the Duke of Portland from Kilmarnock to Troon. Its length was over ten miles, and it cost £4,000 a mile. The iron rails were no more than a yard each in length, and they weighed 40 lbs. each. They were laid on solid blocks of stone, 9 to 12 inches in thickness, and rather more than a foot square at base and surface. The width from rail to rail was 4 feet, and this was filled with road metal for the horse. The railway, which was double, crossed the

Irvine near Milton by a bridge of four arches, the span of each arch 40 feet in width, and the height above the river 20 feet. It ran through Shewalton Moss for a mile, and its formation at that point was attended by no little difficulty. The line required upwards of 70,000 stone "sleepers," which cost 6d each, and an equal number of cast-iron rails, which, with carriage from Glenbuck, were estimated at £20,000. On this railway the draught for a horse was from 10 to 12 tons from Kilmarnock to Troon Harbour, and from 8 to 10 tons in the opposite direction. The work was carried through in the years 1810-11, and it was on its completion that the people of Ayrshire first enjoyed, in anything like a systematised way, the luxury of riding upon the railway. To begin with, the accommodation was by no means luxuriant. There was only one "class" of carriage, and that was a truck filled with straw, on which they sat, while the patient animal ahead of them ran them down to the salt water in the morning and brought them back at night. If their progress was comparatively slow, it was at least both safe and sure, it was a vast improvement on previous conditions, and it was free from the danger that occasionally even yet waits attendant on journeying behind the tail of the iron horse.

The Earl of Eglinton of those days enter-

tained the firm belief that, eventually, Ardrossan would be the harbour of Glasgow, and, in 1827, he was largely instrumental in promoting an Act of Parliament, the purpose of which was to connect the harbour with the canal, by that time constructed and working successfully as far as Johnstone. The capital raised, however, was only sufficient for the construction of a single line of railway from Ardrossan as far as Kilwinning, with a branch of about four miles into the Eglinton coal-fields. This was opened in 1832. For the first two years the undertaking was not particularly prosperous, but with the opening of some new pits in 1834, the little line began to justify its existence, and within two years of that date some 60,000 tons of mineral were conveyed from pits to Kilwinning, or to the port of Ardrossan by its means. About the same time a carriage for conveying passengers was put on to run from Ardrossan to Irvine, stopping at the intermediate towns, but the people did not at first take quite kindly to it, with the result that it was reserved a while for picnic and pleasure parties. In 1834, the number of passengers carried was 700; in 1835, 21,000; and in 1836, 29,000. As still obtains in the experience of the great railway concerns of to-day, it was the pennies that ultimately made the line pay. With great forethought, the company that took over the line

from, or that worked the line in connection with, the Earl of Eglinton, fixed the fare at a penny a mile. Neither did they strangle the mineral and goods traffic with exorbitant charges, with the result that ere long the single line was discovered to be insufficient for the work, and that, when the Ayr and Glasgow railway was formed, it found an admirably equipped feeder and branch in the little railroad system in that corner of the shire.

Thus it will be seen that, for a considerable number of years before the promotion of the railway that connected Ayrshire with the city of Glasgow, the railroad was by no means the rarity that most folks in these parts believe it to have been. It was unpretentious, but it was there, doing good work long before the steam horse was linked to the mineral cars or to the comfortable carriages that careered behind it in its annihilation of space.

AMONG THE TOMBS OF AYR

THERE are two Ayrs, the Dead Ayr and the Living Ayr, and whatever else may be said of them, this much at least is amply assured, that of the two the Dead Ayr is by far the more populous.

It would serve no good purpose to try to reckon how many persons, men, women, and children, have lived and died in Ayr. Their number is Legion. Enough, they have gone to their own place; enough, they stand in their lot at the end of their days. No more do they concern themselves with the toil and the care and the anxieties of the years. They have ceased from the sorrows as from the joys of this life. They lie still and are quiet, where the troublers have ceased from their troubling, where the weary are at rest. Beneath the sod, amid the sands, they sleep together, the small and the great, the servant and the master, the prisoner and the task-master. And there they are waiting upon us to join them.

St. John's

But to leave moralising alone, let us instead reverentially visit the places where the dead of Ayr have been laid. One of these, though it has ceased from the outward guise and function of a burying-place, is the ground immediately adjacent to the tower of St. John's, erroneously known as the Fort Castle. There was a time when a church stood here, the Church of St. John, and round about there were many tombstones: stones with floral crosses on them, and thin, unevenly-cut threads, and rude shears or scissors, to tell that beneath there reposed the dust of woman; stones with swords and battle-axes engraven on them, to indicate that the dead had been men of war; but these stones have nearly all gone. Houses and roads, drain pipes and water pipes, gas conduits and electric cables, have encroached upon the place of sanctuary, and possibly a majority of those who pass beneath the shadow of the tower are either ignorant that they are treading an ancient place of sepulchre or in entire carelessness of the fact that the dust of the fathers is beneath their feet. But so it is. Sandy is the soil, sandy with the tribute of the sea. To this very day Ayr has much ado to resist the encroachments of this same sand. It is everywhere. It

asserts itself in gardens and streets, on the Esplanade, on the Low Green ; the wind raises it in clouds. But these things are nothing to what the fathers had to endure ; our fight is nothing to theirs. Before Oliver Cromwell built the Fort walls the dead of this kirkyard were sometimes exposed in their gruesome decay when the storms were out, and the burghers were fain in the most literal sense to bury their dead more than once out of their sight. Now the churchyard is, to the eye at least, non-existent. It is there uncared for, and daily the tides of life go ebbing and throbbing around it, and through it, and over it.

A number of years ago archæology was moved to inquire into the secrets of the Churchyard of St. John's. These were few. Many were the bones that were disturbed. The bodies, uncoffined, had been laid one on the top of the other so that the kindly sand might set about the process of disintegration as speedily as possible. So far, it had done its work. It had decayed everything that would decay, but it had stayed its operations at the skeletons, and the archæologists found themselves in a regular valley of dry bones—the bones very many and very dry. It was a great family, men, women, and children, whose rest was thus disturbed ; and the strangest thing of it all was that of the hundreds of teeth that remained in

the jawbones not one was decayed in any way whatever. There were teeth worn down to the very bone, the teeth of old men and women, but their enamel was all intact and perfect. There was a skull that had been cleft, and the finders wondered in what fray the man had succumbed, feudal or national, or by what accident he had met his death. There were bodies deep down beneath the very foundation-walls of the church, and the finders surmised these as having lain there probably for full seven round centuries. There was one stone coffin which had aforetime been despoiled of its contents, and the finders speculated as to what notable, or what father abbot, or what high ecclesiastic had had the honour of being buried in this enduring casket. Beneath and within the tower was the skeleton of some person, a man, highly honoured when he had completed his course; a tall man he had been, and in all probability of high office in the Church of St. John in days that were pre-Reformation.

Interesting as the researches were, there was something vandal in them. It was good to see the stone floor of the church that once had been, the floor that had resounded to the tread of Robert the Bruce and the stern men that had carved out the liberties of Scotland with sword and battle-axe; it was good to see the foundation-

walls, and to realise that upon these for long a fair and large structure had stood ; it was good to find the base of one of the original pillars that had supported the long-vanished roof, still *in situ*, and to recall the day when a Stewart of Ochiltree had made practical protest against image worship in the Parish Church of Ayr ; it was good to think of Welsh and Knox and of Willock, and to go further back to the days of the Catholic fathers when the church was a shrine and a sanctuary against violent men—all these things, and others beside, were good ; nevertheless, the seekers after the antiquarian felt greatly grieved and vandal in that they had to disturb the sleepers in the place of dry bones. And perhaps these might rather and better have been left alone until the breaking of the day, when once again the spirit shall enliven them and they shall stand upon their feet an exceeding great army.

How old this churchyard is none can exactly say. The Church of St. John, whose stones were taken in the eighteenth century to complete the steeple of the Tolbooth, was erected as far back as the end of the twelfth century, but it may have been that that church was built on the site occupied by another fane, smaller and less pretentious. Of such a building there is no recorded story, but Ayr was a place of great consequence in those days. It had a large

population, its ecclesiastics took high rank, and it requires no demonstration that it had an earlier place of worship. When the archæologists were at work in St. John's they found skeletons beneath the foundation-walls; and, concluding that no interments could ever have been permitted beneath such walls, they conjectured that the dead had originally been laid outside the walls of the earlier church, and that in the process of rebuilding, they had either been taken within the walls of St. John's or the walls themselves had been founded right upon their place of sepulture.

But however that may be, what is undeniable is that many generations of the men and women of Ayr must have found rest in this neglected or otherwise appropriated God's Acre. Semblance of churchyard it bears none to-day, nevertheless it will have its own share of the story to tell in the great day of the telling. They will come forth from it who saw the Norse fleet drop anchor out there off the river's mouth, and the Norsemen stay—and stay in vain—to sack the Castle of Ayr; who followed Sir William Wallace to the burning of the Barns, and Robert the Bruce in his wanderings and warrings, in his weariness and watchfulness, in his victories and his triumphs; who came across the sands in the long-evolving Catholic days to worship at the altars of the saints that were not few within the

walls of St. John's; who played their part in the civil government of the town 'mid many troublous times; who rode in foray and fray and espoused causes that had their issue in the blood feud; who heard Willock preach when he had broken away from the Franciscans; who went with the throng to hear John Knox denounce the errors of the Church of Rome; who were in Ayr in the days when John Welsh found it exceeding wicked and the streets thereof noisome and very troublous; who saw the Roundheads march along the causeway and watched them with patient, thorough hands construct the octagonal fort with its great bastions that Ayr has foolishly permitted to be despoiled, to go into decay, to be turned into a quarry; who saw the Royalists come again, and again pass away, with their Stuart folly and pretence, with their assumption and persecution. There will be in the throng men who died in the plague, who died of famine, who perished in martyrdom. Monks and priests and presbyters, warriors and sailors and burgesses, provosts and bailies and deacons and conveners, the great, the small, the rich, the poor; tribe after tribe, troop after troop of the mothers of Ayr—all these and many more the sands of St. John's will give up on That Day. Surely it will be a sight worth seeing!

The Old Churchyard

When Oliver Cromwell took the Church of St. John's and — beshrew his memory in that he did it! — converted it into an armoury, he salved the sore his action begat in Ayr with money, and forthwith there rose on the friars' lands on the banks of the river the church that the passing of full two and a half centuries has well dignified with the name of Old. As things have come about, there is nothing romantic in the surrounding churchyard. It is plain, it is unpretending. It is enclosed in high walls, it is none too well kept. The grass grows rank, the stones moulder and decay, there seems to be none to care for them as they might well be cared for, and the river runs close by, sometimes roaring, sometimes rippling, sometimes still, full, and peaceful, stayed by the rising tide; sometimes a mere series of streams stealing along to the sea 'mid rocks and runs and weeds; sometimes hard bound in ice; sometimes, when the summer suns are high and the rains are in their chambers, offensive both to sight and smell. There is no bonnier stream anywhere than the river Ayr, but just at this point 'tis no fit place for the nymphs.

There is sore need for Old Mortality here. The churchyard has the Town Council for

its guardians; I wot some of the stones are rising up in judgment now, undecipherable, frayed, unlettered, mouldy, and witnessing against them. This is a trying clime to the softer freestones. I suppose it must come to pass in the course of a few years with the whole of us that our memory and our name shall be gone, alike unknowing and unknown; but for all that, one cannot but regret to see that no effort is being made to stay the ravages of the decaying fingers of Time. It is naught to me that this man or that, of whom I never heard, was born, died in the middle of last century, and was buried here by the river; but in these days when cemetries are places of beauty and restfulness, and when it is a soothing, chastened pleasure to visit them, it goes against the grain to tramp through the long grass, and over the graves themselves, and see on every hand the unstayed signs of decay. Besides, if I remember aright, the very dust of the saints is dear to the common Father; and that makes it less palatable still that the children should be so callously neglectful towards the memorials of their forebears.

This churchyard is full. Its soil is closed against all new-comers; there are but a comparatively few left, and these are of the old stock, for whom entrance may be claimed to

the crowded graves. Like a typical kirkyard of the Westland, the countryside of the Whiggamores, the children of the stock of the Covenants, this one has its Martyrs' Tomb. "The righteous," says the inscription upon it, "shall be kept in everlasting remembrance." And, though "everlasting" is not for kirkyards where the dead are only sleeping, and waiting, here in this plain flat monument is proof, if proof were needed, that the martyrs of Ayr are not likely yet awhile to be forgotten.

Close by the Martyrs' Memorial—to call it a monument would be to elevate an unpretending slab beyond that which it merits—there is a stone that was erected in its own time in memory of an old skipper whose name was M'Master. The inscription on the front of the stone has all but disappeared; it has been illegible these many years; and, if something be not soon done to prevent it, the quaint lines that are on the back of it will very soon have been similarly effaced. These are they:—

"Though Boreas blast and surging waves
Haf tossed Me to and fro,
Yet at the last by Heaven's decree
I harbour here below.
Where at an anchor I do rest
With many of our fleet,
Hoping for to set sail again,
Our Admiral, Christ, to meet."

That is quaint and simple and direct; it is a recognition of the predestination that brought the skipper to the dust of death; it is the expression of faith in the coming again of the heavenly Admiral, and of the hope that many mariners, and the dead man among them, will be there all in good time to loose for the final haven. Not far from the northern door of the church "lyes the remains of Charles Abercrombie, Esq., Civil Engineer, Doon Mouth, near Air, who died 10th August, 1817. Aged 67 years." Mr. Abercrombie, whose cottage—Abercrombie Cottage—still stands hale and strong at the estuary of Doon—was doubtless in his day an admirable citizen, kind, generous, and large-hearted; yet it is impossible to repress the feeling that the poetry, which is the strong feature of the stone, is cast in rather high a strain :—

"A noble Abercrombie's dust lyes here,
A Name to Britons dear. But O, to you,
Ye poor of Air, St. Cyrus, and Maybole,
And you in Glasgow's Infirmary distrest
With Gratitude His Memory record,
Who on you thought in your sad state forlorn
Like him of Uz: and made your Widowed
Hearts to sing; can you this first and best of
Men forget? That were Strange. Ah! I want
Words, and language fails to sing of Such

MATCHLESS WORTH,

Worth which now ripens in a happier clime,
And brighter Sun beyond the bounds of time."

To former ministers of the church, that stands very unpretentiously in the heart of the thickly peopled God's Acre, and whose inner walls are by no means bereft of monumental slabs and tablets; where also may be seen the tattered and war-torn battle-flags of the territorial regiment, the Royal Scots Fusiliers—there are one or two interesting memorials. "Speak no evil of the dead"—wise words these, for we shall all require all the charity we can get when our deeds are summed up; nevertheless, it is hard to repress at least a smile as we contemplate the round form and benevolent face of the happy presentment of the Rev. William Adair, who died 12th February, 1684, right in the heart and worst of the Killing Times. The reverend gentleman is in the attitude of prayer. Once there came into the bay an enemy's vessel, and great was the dread of the inhabitants thereat. In those days men believed in prayer, as they well might, and so the townsfolk hastened to get the minister. Mr. Adair repaired forthwith to the Auld Brig, he kneeled him down on the causeway, he prayed for the interposition of Him Who has the winds in the hollow of His hand and Whom the seas obey; and even as he prayed, the east winds blew amain, and the would-be invading warship was driven hence from the shores of Ayr. Great was the

deliverance, and great was the gratitude; and when the minister died, the people had him reproduced in stone and—there he is, with his hands in front of him, even as of yore he asked the interference of the Almighty for the land and for the people.

It was this same Mr. Adair, all the narratives unite in saying, that brought Maggie Osborne, the last of the Ayr witches who expiated their sorcery at the stake, to her unholy ending. That may have been so—there is little reason to doubt that it was so; nevertheless his face, as reproduced, is that of a very jolly old gentleman who lived well, and who ought to have been possessed of his full share of the milk of human kindness. It is a far cry to the middle of the seventeenth century; these were Mosaic days, when as yet one could hear the rumbling and the grumbling of the thunders of Sinai, and "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" was a cardinal article of faith, second only in its binding character to the Divine commands of the Decalogue. And the chances are that, even as the doctor leaves the bedside of a dying man or woman and cracks a joke with a friend, so Adair, having seen Maggie Osborne duly cremated, went home to an early dinner with unspoiled appetite, and grateful to God that he had been the instrument of performing justice upon the witch woman who too

long had cleft the night sky in her excursions to the Nick of the Balloch in Galloway. These are things of time and place and environment.

When the time comes for Mr. Adair to ascend in the new body he will have the goodly company of Dr. William Dalrymple, who, with members of his family, sleeps in a neighbouring tomb. For sixty-eight years Dr. Dalrymple was minister of Ayr. It was he that baptized Robert Burns. It was he whose character Burns sketched in the couplet that described him as having the heart of a child and a life like the new-driven snaw. An easy-going, good man, he served his day and generation well, and at the period of his death he was over fourscore and ten years old. Adjoining the monument in the outer wall of the church that records the death of Dr. Dalrymple, is a stone that was put there by the Town Council in memory of the Rev. William M'Gill, D.D., "in testimony of the sense which they and the community they represent retain of his distinguished worth in the discharge of the pastoral duties of this parish for a period of fifty-six years." This is the Dr. M'Gill who was the colleague of Dr. Dalrymple, and who set ecclesiastical Scotland by the ears in his day as the interpreter of, and as having himself embraced, the Arminian "heresy" that in 1843

resulted in driving Dr. Morison from the Secession Church, and in the formation of the Evangelical Union body that was also known throughout the earlier years of its history as the Morisonian Church. Dr. M'Gill was himself large-hearted enough to believe in the possible regeneration of all men, but he was not of the stuff of which the martyrs are made, and he succeeded in evolving a declaration that satisfied the Church as to his general soundness in the faith, and in living and dying one of the ministers of Ayr. Outside the little corner where these two worthies rest lies the dust of the Rev. Dr. Robert Auld, "for fifty-three years one of the ministers of the parish of Ayr, who died on 17th April, 1853, in his eightieth year."

It would seem as if an appointment to the collegiate charge of the town and a long life went together. Dr. Dalrymple was in the sixty-eighth year of his ministry when he died, Dr. M'Gill was minister for fifty-six years, and Dr. Auld for fifty-three years; and the Rev. Dr. Dykes, at present the senior minister, has well passed his jubilee, and has all the appearance of a man who might well succeed in securing honourable place in the tenure of the office which he holds, as he has done already in the respect and esteem of the people whose parish minister he is.

Dr. Auld has passed into the anecdotage of the town. To hear him preach came the well-known character, Rab Hamilton; and, seating himself on the stairs that led up to one of the "lofts," his head slipped through the railing. Waking with a start, he tried to withdraw his head, and finding it jammed, he shouted at the pitch of his voice: "A man a-hanging! A man a-hanging!" Broad were the smiles of the worshippers. Dr. Auld afterwards took Rab to task for it, but the "natural" was equal to the occasion, and informed the reverend gentleman that the accident that had befallen him was nothing more than a judgment on him for leaving his own godly Dr. Peebles, the minister of Newton, and coming to hear the drones of the Auld Kirk. It was to the same Dr. Auld that the same Rab Hamilton expounded the nature of the blessing that was upon the poorshouse porridge—"Ye nae suner tak' oot a spunefu' than't fills up again," and that he told his dream of going to heaven and finding he was the first man from Ayr that had entered the place since the year of the doctor's ordination. It was Dr. Auld, too, that came nigh getting carried off by a veritable Hornie one night as he was finding his way home late through the green sand-hills of the Fort. Sure enough the Thing assailed him, sure enough it impaled his garments on its horns and would not let him go. Earnestly

he besought the aid of Heaven against the grasping enemy of mankind; and in due time he discovered that the Hornie was nothing more infernal than a goat that had thought to "dunch" him, and whose horns had caught fast in the tail pockets of his coat. Withal, these are but small matters, and when Dr. Auld died it was granted on all hands that he had served his day and generation faithfully and well.

I shall not wander at large among these tombs of the Old Churchyard. I look around me and I see the names of men, here and there, and of women whom I remember well. I see monuments to men and women who departed this life in the eighteenth century. I see carved and graven stones crumbling to decay, with quaint images on them of Justice and Time and Death, and Angels good and bad. I see sand-glasses, stone representations of them, that were put there many a year since to bid the stranger halt and muse and moralise, and be ready. I see stones that are no longer "on the perpendicular"; flat stones, mossy, embedded, and green; "thruch" stones, with suggestively rank grass growing and twining about their pillars; I see tracks that run about and among the tombs and over them, mounds that are uneven and uncared for, and patches where the river sand shows up as if in due time it meant to reassert itself and take hold

of the surface again with its myriad fingers. Beyond all, I see the blurred and defaced inscriptions, the stones without inscriptions, the evidences of the apathy that waits upon desolation and that courts it, the indications almost everywhere of the ruin that will befall this place of the dead, as it has already befallen the earlier burying-ground of St. John's. So far as the kirkyards go, Ayr, parochially—whether ecclesiastically or municipally, I do not try to discriminate — has proven herself, is proving herself still, callous to the point of Vandalism.

The "Whig" Kirkyard

There are three burying-grounds in Wallacetown: the old "Whig Kirkyaird," the "New"—but only relatively new—Wallacetown Cemetery, and the churchyard that is the last resting-place of the Roman Catholics.

The Whig Kirkyard is a small, triangular bit of ground at the head of Cross Street. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century a Secession Church stood in the heart of it. The Seceders were the legitimate ecclesiastical heirs of the Covenanters, the Westland Whigs, and just as for many years the Original Secession Church was called the Whig Kirk, so the little burying-ground that was originally an adjunct to the first meeting-house of the Auld Lichts in Ayr was

called the Whig Kirkyard. And here, among the sands, lie many who were of the old stock of the land — Scottish, Presbyterian, resolute and "dour."

Though the churchyard was, however, the property of the Original Seceders, there were many others than Whigs that were laid away in its sands. Burghers and anti-Burghers, Calvinists and Arminians, Erastians and Voluntaries, all found sepulchre beneath the long grass. But for all that, the predominant note or tone was "Whig," and the Whigs were the stock of the Covenant, descendants of the Covenanters, children of the Secession that had its ecclesiastical beginnings with the handful of men that associated themselves with the Erskines in their expulsion from the Church of Scotland, and of the Praying Societies that were the antithesis of the Moderatism that leavened the national Zion at the period of the first Secession. The Whigs gave the kirkyard its name, and there are many who tenant it of that once rigid and orthodox communion.

I could not but smile one day when, wandering among the gravestones, my eye caught, engraven on a stone, the name of a woman who died when I was young, but whom nevertheless I remember well. She was old; she was good beyond that which was written; she was of the race of the

"unco" orthodox; she was of the salt of the earth; she was reputed as near a saint as anybody who had not yet put off this earthly tabernacle ever could be. Of all the good Whigs, she was the best. I knew that that was so. And yet—ah, sinful youth that I was!—I was afraid of her, I did not like her, and I trembled to think that I should have to spend eternity in her company. She was stern. She was sour. She frowned at you when you moved in the church. Her great and unexampled goodness failed to make her lovable; but there she was, chief of the mothers in Israel, the pick of the lot! Long after boyhood had given place, I chanced to foregather with a well-known Ayrshire man resident in Glasgow, and in conversation with him about olden times, this woman's name came up; and I found that he, too, had been indoctrinated in her unspeakable goodness; that he, too, was taught to regard her as the example and pattern in those things of personal godliness to which it was his duty to aspire; and that he had been similarly scared at the very idea of endless association with her. And still later, there came a letter to these parts from Australia wherein this elect lady came up for prominent mention. The writer had had a dream. In the visions of the night he had died and gone to heaven, and as he walked up the midst of the street of it, who should he meet

but the minister of the old Whig Church? The ruling passion being still strong upon him, the minister was engaged in pastoral visitation, and no sooner had he given the dreamer welcome than he added that he was just going away to call on Mrs. Ne'ersicanither, and would he just go with him? The dreamer declined; the minister was insistent; the dreamer retreated backwards; the minister followed close; and ultimately it ended in the dreamer rushing clean out of the Holy City altogether and tumbling over the battlements—at which point he woke, and lo! it was a dream. From which it may be seen that it is possible to be exceeding good and yet unloved. Rather a sad conjunction, is it not?

These grey Whigs—one wonders after what sort they are faring where, beyond these voices, there is peace. In their day they were, many of them, stout, dour Presbyterians, rigorous of discipline, strong in the Law, devout in their maintenance of the old landmarks that the fathers had set up. There was a great deal of the Old Testament in their composition, of the thoroughness of the chosen people. On earth they were the sojourners of Mesech, they dwelt in the tabernacles of Kedar. They were of the sort of which the Covenanters were made, men who would have taken to the fields and the mosses rather than yield their convictions to State or to

Prelate. It may be they have attained to a land where the theologians have ceased from troubling, and where they see things as they are, and not as they thought they were; but however that may be, I take it that they have yet to learn that they were wrong in standing firm by their convictions, and I take it, further, that in their fidelity to principle, in their determination to hand on the truth unimpaired, in their clinging to what they looked upon as the essentials and fundamentals of the faith, they left us an example that we should follow in their footsteps.

Over close upon the whole of the nineteenth century there stretched the ministry of two Whig ministers of Ayr. The Rev. Dr. Stevenson was there, and had been there a year or two, when the century opened, and he survived for quite forty years; after him, and a year or two's interval, came the Rev. John Robertson. Both lie in the little kirkyard surrounded by their friends. The one lives in Original Secession story as the author of a work on the Atonement, and as the writer of the historical part of the Testimony wherein the principles of the denomination are set forth; the other in the memories of many of the townsfolk of Ayr, and in the Robertson Memorial Church that looks down upon the river from its elevation above the Victoria Bridge. The anecdotage of Dr. Stevenson has grown scanty. He was an

absent-minded man, easy-going, learned. It so befell one day that he was invited to a public dinner in the King's Arms Hotel, and his loving spouse had laid out for him a clean white "stock" so that he might do himself and the occasion honour. She discovered after he had gone that the stock was still there, lying on the bed; also the old stock that he had taken off, and much she wondered in what guise he had gone to the function. Neither was she greatly charmed when, on his return, she found he had attired himself, as to the necktie that did duty in these days for the "dog collar" of ours, with a big white pocket-handkerchief that she had been using as a "wrap" for her best bonnet. In the Doctor's day there were great sacramental "occasions," and as many ministers of the denomination as could be got were wont to repair to the scene. Thus, on a thanksgiving Monday there might be three or four in the manse of some country kirk. By Tuesday morning it was time to scatter, and Dr. Stevenson had perforce to pack his bag. While thus engaged it was customary for his host to announce the fact to his co-Presbyters. "Brother Stevenson is packing;" and there was a rush of the Whig divines to secure each man his own sleeping gear, and such other "things" as he had brought with him.

Of the Rev. John Robertson I say nothing. His life and work have already been sketched. Neither do I stay longer among the Whigs, except to say that there is one spot in the kirkyard that I myself not seldom think upon. It is always associated in my mind with the varying seasons. I can see the summer suns lighten it; I can see it when the rains make it sodden; I can see the grass on it in the stormy nights all blowing the one way; I can see the gravestone rise white among the white snow. It clusters with memories for me.

Thus I leave the Whigs at rest, a goodly company. As becomes them, their sanctuary is plain, unpretending. They set no store on pomp or structure here, and the burying-ground where they are in quiet does not appeal to the eye of sense. To appreciate its associations one has to know the rock whence these people were hewn, and after what sort they fought the fight.

Wallacetown Cemetery

Close by the Whig Kirkyard is the "New" Wallacetown Cemetery. These "News" are a little misleading at times. The New Bridge of Doon was there before anybody remembers, the New Brig o' Ayr was an hundred years old and more when its roadway began to crack up and the contractor was called to take it away,

and the New Church of Ayr is looking a full century in the face. "New" is obviously very relative when it is applied to buildings or to bridges or to kirkyards.

The one notable monument in the Wallacetown Cemetery is that of Dr. John Taylor, the Reformer, who died in 1842. Not here he lies, in the old town, the scene of his struggles and his warrings and his fightings; it was in Island Magee, in Ireland, that he yielded up his spirit.

A notable, strenuous man was the Doctor in the early Reform days; a man of moods and enthusiasms, generous of impulse, quick in temper, high in courage, eloquent of speech; a warrior, a fighter of the openest, honestest sort; careless of consequences to himself if only by suffering, by toil, by labour, even by imprisonment, he might advance the weal of his fellowmen. And then, as the years wore on, and the fires, too long at white heat, burned themselves low, a man of the same nature, disappointed, chastened, humble, sincerely Christian, whiling away the days in the writing of poetry, of hymns, in the pursuit of a quiet country life in Ireland; patiently waiting the end, ready to welcome it, glad to receive Death as a friend. Pure of character, of honour undefiled, and wholly unselfish, Dr. Taylor's was a disposition that even the ardent pursuit of politics could not

spoil, or turn into the by-paths of vanity, of self-opinionativeness, of the facility to put party where principle, and principle only, ought to be.

Of the Taylors of Blackhouse, the Doctor was a prominent figure in the political struggles and warrings of the year that preceded and that followed the great Reform agitation of Thirty-two. When he died in 1842 there was one who thus, in the columns of the *Ayr Advertiser*, recalled him as the people of Ayr had known him: "Gifted with talents of a very high order, to which study and travel had imparted great polish and versatility, and with an eloquence that made him the idol of the people and the admiration of many an audience, he relinquished his profession for the strife of politics. We think we see him yet on the platform, his full black eye kindled with his subject, and his long dark hair in graceful curls on his shoulders. On such occasions, fluent in speech, felicitous in expression, and impassioned in delivery, the tones of his rich and melodious voice fell like bold music on the ear, while his nicely-balanced sentences never failed to elicit a shudder at his deadly-aimed sarcasm, a burst of applause at the fervour and beauty of his appeals to the patriotic feelings, or a hearty laugh at his merry depiction of the ludicrous."

Such he was, the best, and certainly by far the

most prominent, of the Ayr Radicals of these stormy days. Seen from this distance, he revelled in the storm. At the notable General Election of 1832 he was a candidate for the representation of the burghs, and was defeated in a three-cornered fight, his successful Whig opponent, Mr. Kennedy of Dunure, polling 375 votes to his 164, and the Tory, Mr. Cruickshank, bringing up the rear with 33. Two years later he was again in the field against Lord James Stewart, and was a second time defeated, this time by a majority of 95. On the first of these occasions, when the result of the poll was declared, Ayr rose in tumult. Special constables were sworn in; but these notwithstanding, the mob proceeded to wreak vengeance on the property of those, Whigs most of them, who had failed, as had been expected of them, to support Dr. Taylor. So disorderly was the town that the Yeomanry were called out to prevent the Newton and Wallacetown rioters from crossing by the bridges to the royal burgh. Stones and brick-bats rained in on them from all directions. The mob broke into three main divisions, and whenever the cavalry tried to disperse one party they were attacked in the rear by the other two, and severely "pelted." With remarkable adaptability the crowd threw up barriers of carts, of masons' tresses, of barrows, and everything else

suitable and available for the purpose, and behind these, through a long evening, and until midnight, they held their own. Imprisonments followed in due course, as was probably meet that they should; but apart from all questions political or pertaining to the peace, the rioting itself was a powerful tribute to the hold that Dr. Taylor had on the affections of his Radical fellow-townsmen.

But the stormy side of the Doctor's career did not end with, neither was it confined to, his unavailing efforts to get into Parliament. He challenged Mr. Kennedy of Dunure to fight a duel, and was put in prison to prevent him from taking steps to compel his unwilling opponent to grant him the satisfaction that he thought to be due to his outraged honour. He took an active part in the Chartist movement, and was a member of the celebrated London Convention. There he spoke boldly and fearlessly in favour of the Charter, maintaining that its demands were nothing more than the rights of the people, and affirming that he was ready to go any length to obtain it. For giving such plain expression to his opinions he was lodged in prison, but there was not sufficient evidence against him, and he was accordingly liberated. In addition he was a staunch upholder of the civic rights and privileges of the people of Ayr; he exposed abuses that

had by design or carelessness crept in; and, for the time being, he forestalled an attempt to compel payment for entrance to Burns' Monument, and made it and its grounds what was called at the time "a free promenade in all time coming (!) not only to the people of Ayr, but to those of Great Britain."

Such an one was John Taylor, the Radical, whose statue adorns the Wallacetown Cemetery. It has been said, and there may be an element of truth in it, that he suffered keen disappointment because of the ingratitude of the people of Ayr, as that was demonstrated in their refusal to send him to Parliament. That, I say, may have been so; but there is no proof of it. What is more likely is that his ardour cooled, as the intensest ardours not infrequently do under the long-sustained and severe strain that politics exacts of its votaries. However that may be, he retired to Ireland, and there he betook himself to the writing of Christian Lyrics, which were given to the public in book form in 1852. The best known of these, and probably the best, is the hymn that follows:—

"For what shall I praise Thee, my God and my King?
For what blessings the tribute of gratitude bring?
Shall I praise Thee for pleasure, for health, or for ease,
For the spring of delight and the sunshine of peace?

Shall I praise Thee for flowers that have bloomed in my breast,
For joys in prospective and pleasures possessed,
For the spirits that heightened my days of delight,
And the slumber that sat on my pillow by night?

For this should I praise, but if only for this,
I shall leave half untold the dominion of bliss:
I thank Thee for sorrow, for sickness and care,
For the thorns I have gathered, the anguish and fear.

The flowers were most sweet, but their fragrance is flown,
They yielded no fruit, they are withered and gone;
The thorn it was poignant and precious to me,
'Twas the message of mercy—it led me to Thee."

Not very high poetry this; still, it has rhythm and it has sweetness, and it breathes a fervent yet resigned spirit. When Taylor was dead and gone there was a general feeling in Reform circles that his services should not be forgotten; and in due season this monument, with an admirable representation of the Doctor in enduring bronze surmounting it, was erected to his memory. The inscription will be read with interest by Ayrshire folks in all parts of the world. Thus it runs:—

To John Taylor, Esq., of Blackhouse, M.D., born at Newark Castle, Ayrshire, 16th December, 1805, died at Larne, Ireland, 4th December, 1842. He contested the Ayr Burghs in 1832, and again in 1834, on Radical principles, and represented Paisley, etc., at the Chartist Convention in 1839. This statue was erected by public subscription, in commemoration of his virtues as a man and his services as a reformer. Professionally

he was alike the poor man's generous friend and physician; politically he was the eloquent and unflinching advocate of the People's Cause, freely sacrificing health, means, social status, and even personal liberty, to the advancement of measures then considered extreme, but now acknowledged to be essential to the well-being of the State. Requiescat in pace."

Underneath the inscription, on the base of the monument, are these lines, the work of Dr. Taylor himself:—

"The dead are here, the blessed faithful dead,
Whose earthly graves your bitter tears are steeping,
Whose souls by us through the dark valley led
The Saviour holds in His eternal keeping.
Too much ye mourn that yonder heavy sod
Doth hide the lovely from your aching sight,
Too little do ye feel that, sown by God,
They yet shall blossom in His bowers of light."

Here also, surrounding the statue, are many dead. The railway trains run hard by their resting-place, but deep in the sand, theirs is the sleep that is undisturbed of the noise and rush of the world that for them is no more.

The Ayr Cemetery

On the threshold of the New Cemetery I must pause for a little. This is the principal burying-place of the people of Ayr, and has been so for a generation. It is filled with people that I knew —their dust is here—and when I pass underneath the gateway, I feel that I am among friends. On

every side they lie, they fringe every walk, their monuments tell me stories of the past. Some of them I knew very well indeed, others only in their public capacity, others still by hearsay, and by the common report of their character. All around they are slumbering—they who, it seems but the other day were hale and hearty, and engrossed with the bustle and business of life —men and women who were part and parcel of the life of the town, walking its causeways and turning its corners, and inhaling its salt sea breezes. Now it is in a sense with them as if they never had been. Here, amid a scene of beauty, they sleep to the music of the wind in the trees, to the song of the never silent river.

But taking them as a whole, and as representing a generation of the people of Ayr, what is to be said of them? We are very near to them—too near, perhaps, to sum them up or be unduly particular concerning them—but a rough estimate may nevertheless be attempted of them as representative citizens of the last third of the nineteenth century. Many of them were natives, many came into Ayr from without — became identified with it and learned its ways — and others, though they dwelt in it, never became citizens in the true sense. Every town has characteristics of its own. These are not of yesterday. They are part of its heredity, and

it is impossible to get away from them. They are in the people, on the streets, in the associations, in the very atmosphere of the place. They are local, not cosmopolitan. You can see them and feel them, even when you cannot grasp them, or retain them, or define them. Ayr is an ancient town, a haunt of history, of patriotism; a place where dwelt fighters for liberty and for faith; with rivers of song running through it and by it; with stones in it that preach sermons; and it never can be otherwise than that these should pass their influence along until they permeate those who dwell within its gates.

May I say that one of the main characteristics of the generation represented by the inhabitants of this cemetery was a certain steadiness of ongoing that prevented the great mass of them ever making much of this world as individuals; that kept them from being leaders in thought and in action; that prevented them, save in the exceptional cases that go to prove the rule, from making much money; that kept them fairly satisfied with the goods and gear of this life that the gods gave them; that prevented them, on the one hand, from rushing into extremes, and on the other from lapsing into defections; that enabled them to maintain what the Scotch call a calm sough, and that made them tolerant of their fellow-townsmen even when these

appeared to be aspiring to a position in life to which the others did not think they were entitled. The average Ayrian of these years thought much of his home, but he was not so enamoured of it as to desire to keep his children about him, if, by going hence, they might thereby attain to a more competent portion of the good things of this life; and the result is that there are many sons and daughters of Auld Ayr the world over. From its situation and surroundings, and the absence of manufactures on anything like a large scale, Ayr was in these years a favourite residential town, wherein dwelt county families, retired people from other parts of Scotland and from abroad, and not a few who may fairly enough be embraced within the category of that unhappy adjective "genteel." To all these much studied and calculated deference was shown; not deference for their own sakes, but deference of the commercial sort; and these in return, be it said with all respect to them, accepted the homage as their due, assimilated it, rolled it like a sweet morsel under their tongues, and themselves aspired higher and higher. These things, and many more of the same sort, made Ayr, socially, very conservative, divided it into classes and castes, with barriers that shut certain people in and other people out; barriers that were very

difficult indeed to scale, and prevented anything like that communal freedom that was native to the brave old Roman days—in the ballad, at least—when none were for a party but all for the State, when the rich man helped the poor, and the poor man loved the great, and when the brotherhood of man was a reality and not the beautiful dream of that good time coming that is ever so long of arising.

Ayr was in almost every material respect better at the end of the nineteenth century than it was when two-thirds of the century had run their course; a wider-awake Ayr, a more sober Ayr, less of the sleepy hollow than the older Ayr; an Ayr more alive to its possibilities and to many of its responsibilities; a less rigid and a much less orthodox Ayr, the elder orthodoxy being, for this comparison, the standard; a less churchy Ayr, but by no means less careful of the morals and virtues and the duties laid on its shoulders towards the weaker brethren and sisters; an Ayr that would, a great deal of it, fain have drawn to the light, but that never had enough in common among the inhabitants to render any attempt at such drawing sufficiently strenuous and sustained to result in great practical good. It was so generous that it was a favourite haunt and howf of the vagrant, and always maintained a considerable army of loafers, who found it much easier to loaf and to

"sponge" than they did to work, men and women to whom a discriminating people, and calculating as to the consequences, would have either acted on the Pauline injunction, and let them die if they would not take the trouble to earn bread enough to maintain them in life, or else applied, by way of punishment for downright laziness, some species of penal consequence that might have taught them that the way of the idler is both hard and hungry. The same toleration that made life not only possible but easy for the vagrants of each degree, winked in many and diverse ways at the poachers who poached, at the tipplers who tippled, at the gamblers who risked their substance in the hope of netting for their own behoof, and without any toiling and spinning, the substance of other people, and at the breakers of morals and the too easy of conscience. There was no doubt a great deal of charity in some of this, and of consideration for the frailties of mankind, and indeed of human nature; at the same time, Ayr might conceivably have been more rigid and rigorous without any harm accruing to its character or to its reputation.

But leaving these general considerations and conclusions, let us enter the well-kept shrine that is precious and saintly to so many families of the town, and wander here and there among the tombstones. Some of them tell stories. This

plain granite slab in the wall that skirts the line of road recalls an exciting day, the 16th of June, 1876. It was a beautiful forenoon, the sky was clear and the sun was high and hot, and the town went on its way as usual, when suddenly upon the summer air the fire-bell rang out; and even as its iron tongue reverberated and clanged, dense columns of smoke rose up to darken the blue, and the word passed along, with the speed to which only dire tidings can attain, that the Ayr Carpet Works in Fort Street and Charlotte Street were on fire. Sure enough, they were blazing, and that right furiously. They had been immune for many years. The woodwork was dry as timber, the floors were oily, the material everywhere was inflammable, and the fire, accidentally originating, spread and was out of bounds with alarming rapidity. When the girls ran screaming to the doors, the foreman, thinking the alarm was false, closed the only exit of escape. He discovered this mistake too late, hastened back to undo it, was caught in the smoke and flames, and perished. Even at the lapse of nearly thirty years, one recalls the scene with horror; the smoke rising in dense columns, the flames darting from window to window, from storey to storey, the imprisoned, helpless, hapless girls—eight-and-twenty of them—cooped up in a livid furnace, screaming at first for aid, then, and

very soon, overpowered by the rolling smoke, and disappearing into the conflagration that roared and surged around and beneath them. Their suffering was brief, for it was but a few minutes after the fire broke out until the devastating elements had claimed its victims. And from that onward till the close, the crowd could do little else than stand and stare and watch the buildings wrapped up in flames one after another until, floors and gables and roofs collapsing, what had been but an hour or two before a scene of busy, cheerful toil had been converted into a smouldering, smoking ruin, a charnel house after its kind, on whose ruddy heaps and desolation the firemen played their hose to prevent the fire underneath from bursting forth anew. I was present a day or two later when the remains of the victims were found. A large number of them had been entirely consumed; what remained—blackened and charred and limbless as they were—hardly retained any semblance whatever of the human form divine. Such as they were, they were reverently collected and coffined, and such honour was done them, and such sympathy shown to the bereaved friends, as a sympathising and generous community could do by way of public funeral, and ready and substantial aid to the bereaved. And this granite slab, with the two columns of names, remains, after its fashion, to tell the tale.

These—these hapless mill-girls—perished as by fire; so also, though in another way, did the gallant young hero before whose memorial, a chaste, beautiful bit of marble, I stay to recall and to moralise.

"Ronald James Vernon," says the inscription, "Captain, 60th Rifles. Born, 1866. Killed in the heroic assault on Game Tree Fort, 26th December, 1899. His body rests at Mafeking." Short, simple, expressive, it throws the mind back to the South African War, and to beleaguered Mafeking. The tale of Vernon's death may well be recalled. The situation was very grave in Mafeking. For months the Boers had close environed it. Fain would the defenders have broken out; fain would a British force out in the veldt have broken in, but the enemy sat tight, commanding with their guns the sun-baked little town. We knew at home that the Britons within would never yield; we knew the relieving forces were making their way to the place where Baden Powell and his men were grimly fighting; but there was that haunting dread, never far away, that events might prove too much even for such defenders, and they might have to succumb. For it was known to all men that they were hungry and hard bestead.

Game Tree Fort had been very busy. Its guns, its rifle fire, had been what a war corre-

spondent called voluble, and Baden Powell made up his mind to surprise it and to take it by storm ; besides, the relieving force was beyond it, and the General thought that he might be able in the event of victory to open the way to his friends. Christmas Day was hardly done ere the little body of troops moved out, and Captain Vernon with them. There was an armour train, and when its whistle shrieked Vernon sprang forward—forward into what proved to be a valley of death. For the fort was impregnable to a storming party of no more than eighty men. As they dashed forward they encountered a rifle fire which made it all but impossible for any living thing to exist. "Like the hum of myriads of locusts before the wind," the bullets sang and hummed in their song of death dealing. Twice hit, Captain Vernon held on his impetuous way and pursued his onward course in teeth of the foe until he was struck on the head and killed.

The attack on Game Tree Fort has been compared by those entitled to form a judgment to deeds that hold high place in the national chronicles. Vernon sleeps with other heroes at Mafeking, and no one could wish that he should rest elsewhere. Here is his memorial, far from the confused noise and the garments rolled in blood of the battle-field. One can but look at it, sigh over it, feel thankful beside it that this

Ayrshire man was found worthy to the death, and grieve over the events that doomed him, and such as he was, to slaughter. Captain Vernon was conscientiously afraid that he might not do his duty, that he might not be able to live up to his own high conception of duty, in such a dread moment as that which befell him. But, said an eye-witness, "it was a charge of heroes," and foremost in the charge Ronald James Vernon fell.

There is a certain sadness, too, experienced in standing in front of the handsome granite monument that marks the last resting-place of Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, K.C.M.G., who died on 17th July, 1900, at the age of sixty-five. Sir Thomas was a man of whom, for many years, Ayr was proud. Sprung from the best stock of the auld toun, he had gone out to Australia to wrestle with the world, to struggle, to fight, to win, to encounter vicissitudes, and then to be cut down by death when all we who knew him could well have wished that he had been spared in health a few years longer. M'Ilwraith was a man of indomitable perseverance and courage. Gifted with a clear intellect, large ideas, and the capacity to look beyond the present and to see before him in the eye of a vivid imagination an Australia great and flourishing and populous—an island continent home for Britons of many generations yet to come—he was essentially the sort of man

to make his mark in a new country. By sheer courage and capacity he fought his way into the very forefront of the political life of Queensland. The colony's brightness was life to him. It was a land of possibilities, and these appealed to him. His contemporaries called him "the old lion," and they were proud of him. His opponents fought him hard in many a breach, but he never turned his back on anything or on anybody, but always marched breast forward. He lived in the shadow as well as in the sunshine. He rose to high estate as Prime Minister, and remained in office during the greater part of his political life, largely escaping that prolonged sojourn in the cool shades of opposition that is the fate of so many Parliamentarians. It was he who, of the wide Imperial instinct, planted first the British flag on the shores of New Guinea, and one of the bitterest disappointments of his life was when the Government at home declined to ratify the deed he had done. He had honour among his own people, for they gave him the freedom of the town. "But I," he exclaimed, as he stood, almost tongue-tied, with the burgess ticket in his hand—"but I was free-born!"

I knew Sir Thomas well during the latter part of his life, the year or two that he struggled on with failing health, but unconquered and undismayed spirit, in the hope of being able to be

sufficiently restored to return to Queensland and speak with his opponents in the Parliamentary gate. It was quite clear that nothing short of a miracle could ever make him well again. His intellect was clear, however, his interest in the colony and its fortunes was in nowise abated, and nothing pleased him more than to descant on its natural features, its vast plains, its hidden sources of water, its possibilities of grazing, of harvests, of minerals, of the products of the tropical and sub-tropical zones, its bright skies and warm suns, and of its crying need for people to dwell within its almost limitless boundaries. And when he had thus descanted of Queensland he would recall his old days in Ayr, and would listen greatly interested to the stories of its sons dead and alive, and would brighten up as he heard repeated their quaint sayings in the dialect of his youth.

But Sir Thomas's days were numbered, and one bright summer day they brought all that was mortal of him down to Ayr and laid him in the same ground with his father and mother. It was a quiet termination to a stirring and eventful life. "This is distressing," said a well-known townsman to me as we stood together by the side of the open grave; and then he turned his head away to hide the tears that were rising to his eyes. And so in a sense it was distressing; but

by-and-by, when all the mists and misunderstandings have been scattered by time and by knowledge, the name of Thomas M'Ilwraith will stand high on the list of those who tended the growth of Queensland, and who, working and legislating for many years hence, saw her time afar off and was glad.

Here also, where he is enclosed, all that is mortal of him, in the house with the green shutters, one stands sadly by the grave of George Douglas Brown. Brown's was a swift passage across the scene. He dropped into fame as a shooting star drops down through the spheres, shone with all the lustre of a bright constellation against the night sky, and then was wrapped in the gloom and in the silence of death. So at least it seems now. Ayrshire, and of the soil of it, his was a steady, plodding, upward career. Gifted, varied of talents, sound of judgment, he kept on struggling and fighting, until one day there came forth from the Press "The House with the Green Shutters," and the Scotch world everywhere knew that there was a meteor on the literary horizon. Whether Brown's one and only work worth mentioning will become a classic, or whether it has already done its turn, or whether it will remain an earnest of greater and more sympathetic things that might have followed, time alone can tell. Its grip, its grasp, its hard-

ness, its powers of delineation, its strong literary style, there can be no denying. It was the very antithesis of what is known as "Kailyardism," the reproduction of an unreal and most undesirable goody-goody Scottish life compounded of "meenisters" and elders and metaphysical weavers, or wrights or blacksmiths, of village philosophers who are a terror to those who do well, of love stronger than death, of general all-round conditions that fortunately do not exist, or that very rarely indeed exist in conjunction, and which, if they did exist, would make the seat of their presence a place to be shunned. With these George Douglas Brown had no sympathy, and in his "House with the Green Shutters" he showed the other side of life—the sordid, the mean, the contemptible; the jealousies and bickerings of the people, the skeletons in the cupboards, the unlovelinesses, and the moral defacements and debasements.

There was general sadness when George Douglas Brown died; for he seemed to be standing on the threshold of a great career. Of Ochiltree native, he presided at the Ochiltree Schoolfellows' New Year Reunion that followed the issue of his book, and that preceded his too early taking-off; and there, looking forward to the ending of all good Ochiltronians, he rhymed:

"May Lugar sing them to their rest,
When they have dune and bye wi't,
And then to Heaven wi' the best,
May they eternal fly wi't,
On Yon Great Day."

Not Lugar but Ayr sings George Douglas Brown to his long sleep. It was a sorrowing company that stood by when he was buried; a company that felt that death had claimed one who might well have been spared to have dignified and ornamented the years. So one feels now as he stands by the green turf that has taken this gifted son of the shire to its embraces. But who can tell? And who shall say that this also was not wisely and well ordered?

It seems to be only the other day since Mr. C. G. Shaw was going out and in to his work as usual. There was no man in Ayrshire, viewed from any county point of view, who in his day exercised such influence on the shire as he did. He was a combination—a remarkable combination in many ways—of influences. He stood officially as no other man did for the landed interest. Estate-running, the management of landlords and tenants, was part of his business, and he knew it so well that the most powerful Peers within the home borders were fain to profit by his knowledge and experience. He was the County Clerk; had been so in the days ere yet the representative County Council had come

upon the scene; and he had such grasp and grip as pertain only to the man of straight intent, of conscious power, and of thorough business capacity. He knew what he was about, and where he was, in all the details of shire administration. He could focus the average view of many minds with a shrewdness, and at the same time with a directness of expression, that were, for a man in his position, of the very highest value. It was part of his creed—and a a very essential part of it—never to make an enemy. Men he had to thwart, and often, but he did it in such a way that they never could complain of the spirit or tone of the thwarting. And yet he was not one who beat about the bush in the very least. The policy of shelving a thing by delaying further consideration of it, or of remitting it to a committee in the hope that it might never be heard of again, found no favour with him.

By this combination of business shrewdnesses and personal excellencies he succeeded in securing the almost unlimited confidence of the Ayrshire landed classes. They knew that he had both principle and principles; they knew also that he was fully alive to the power of the give and take, and it was a foregone and a justified conclusion in their minds that he would honestly advise them to their own advantage. A rather humorous

instance of this faith in Mr. Shaw occurred once at a meeting of Road Trustees in my own presence. One of the lairds at the table fell sound asleep, and calmly slumbered while his co-trustees discussed a motion and its amendment in rather heated language. Neither side gave way in argument, and accordingly it was resolved that the vote should be taken. The chairman was a worthy General, with rather a thin voice, and with a view to waking up the sleeping road authority, he cried out: "And how do you vote, Mr. Blank?" Mr. Blank woke up with a start, and exclaimed: "I vote as Shaw votes." The laughter that followed was smothered; the incident was not one to be laughed at loud out, but rather to be treasured away for after-dinner use. Withal, Mr. Blank was probably not far wrong — was probably not wrong at all — in yielding his judgment to that of the Clerk.

Mr. Shaw was such a hard worker that he had but little time for the pleasures and amusements of life. His recreations were few and far between, and he had far too much to do ever to be quite idle. Withal, he had all the gifts and graces that make for popularity. He read men like a book. He knew by intuition the difference between independence of soul and independence of language; and the rough and ready speech that is often mistaken for the genuine article

never imposed on him. He was indeed, take him for all in all, a man of exceptional and unique gifts. No man in Ayrshire was anyway like his equal as a pivot of county thought and action. From Duke and Marquis and Earl down to cottars and cottagers and roadmen, he made a healthy influence felt over a very wide area; and when he died in the early summer of 1902, there was a universal recognition that the shire had lost—if the expression may be allowed—her premier citizen. Threescore and eleven years old was Mr. Shaw when they laid him to rest in the cemetery, and as I pause by his grave and remember him, I can recall one who, in his own way, served the Ayrshire of his day with a devotion the remembrance of which well deserves to be handed down.

I was myself a boy at Ayr Academy when Dr. Hunter, the rector, died. Dr. Hunter had a high reputation as a scholar, and he was a man of literary and scholastic gifts, and of simple, good personal character; but he was no disciplinarian, and, during the closing years of his rectorship and his life, the discipline of the Classical Department, over which he presided, had got entirely out of bounds. He was a dreamer, a builder of castles in the air. He could see that the bigger boys were out of hand, and many a pious resolve he made to bring them to legitimate submission.

But by that time he was too old for the task, and in place of setting about it, he contented himself with the dream that he indulged in of setting the academical house in order. "This Academy," he declared once in my hearing, "is going to the dogs, but by the help of God, I shall begin to reform it next Monday." Next Monday, and many more Mondays, came and went, but nothing was done, and in due time Dr. Hunter died, and was succeeded by a man of another and, educationally, a much fitter type.

It was from Elgin Academy that Dr. Macdonald came—not "Doctor" to begin with, but "Doctor" so long that he can never now be talked of as anything else. The day he came to be introduced to his new sphere of work the boys gathered in clusters and had a careful scrutiny of him. A grave man he looked, with deep, thoughtful, penetrating, rather sad eyes; a man conscious of his responsibilities, yet not afraid of them, or overpowered by them in any way; the very last kind of a man over whom the undisciplined hordes could hope to prevail. That was the first impression, and it was never effaced. When the Doctor opened his lips to speak his voice was sweet and low, and, when he smiled, his face was illuminated with a look that gave it an attractiveness that still constitutes a pleasant memory to his old pupils. But the gravity was never far away.

The change in the Academy began with the very first day. The wild boys had their master —I can speak from experience—and they needed nobody to tell them so. At once there was a new influence at work. It permeated, it gave tone to, the whole school. A good influence, too, that made the boys who had never worked before work now, and that made those who had been genuinely and zealously studious more so than ever. For a score of years Dr. Macdonald was at the head of the Academy, and he made a broad, deep mark on the education of Ayrshire during that period. His fame as a teacher was in the universities. He organised, he managed, he systematised the course of the Academy and transformed what had been pretty much, so far as the parents of the pupils were concerned, a go-as-you-please method of training, into an affair of curricula and time-tables, and scientific knowledge building. It was in recognition of his merits and his success as a teacher that the rector obtained his degree. But his worth was not by any means localised to the domain of the schoolmaster. He never became in the remotest degree pedantic with the pedantry that marks so many men who give their lives to the training of the young, and who unconsciously assimilate beyond that which is good for them the mingled air of authority and the need for constant talking

to boys and girls in the language that they will understand and apprehend. Dr. Macdonald was a man of highly cultured mind. He wrote of Druids and of Druidism with the familiarity of one who could transport himself to days so remote in the history of this country that the light that fell on them has long since become dim. Till his day Ayr had been in the enjoyment, if not strictly in the possession, of a "Roman road," and none doubted that its ancient causeway had been laid by the gifted roadmakers from the banks of the Tiber; but he sought to reduce the Roman road to the test of practical archæology, and alas! the road remained, but without the "Roman." In general archæology he excelled, in general culture, in the special antiquarian knowledge that comes with learning and study, and Ayr recognised in him one of the best, as he was undoubtedly one of the most prominent, of her citizens.

After twenty-one years' good service he accepted the position of Rector of Kelvinside Academy, where he repeated the educational successes of Ayr; and then, after a comparatively brief period of retirement, all that was mortal of him was brought back to Ayr—the year was 1900—and laid to rest in the Cemetery, once a place of many associations for him, and endeared

by many a sundered friendship. His years, at death, were seventy-four.

The Rev. William Grant, of Wallacetown Parish Church, was quite a young man when the Disruption of 1843 took place. Not long had he filled the pulpit of the Chapel of Ease, but from the very opening of his ministry in Ayr he had identified himself with the Evangelicalism and the resolve after spiritual liberty that were jointly and severally preparing an highway for the memorable event that called the Free Church into existence. It has been said that he was by far the strongest and most outstanding man who "came out" in the Presbytery of Ayr, but a generalisation of this kind is much more easily made than substantiated; and besides, Mr. Grant required no background of smaller personalities to exhibit himself as a man worthy of the position he held from 1843 until in 1876 he closed an eminent ministry in the Ayr Free Church. The inscription on his tombstone describes him as "a man of gifted mind, earnest purpose, sanctified experience, and loving heart; an able minister of the New Testament, and a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Beyond that, he was a powerful influence for good among the young men of Ayr; for he was intensely sympathetic with the opening, the inquiring, even the doubting mind; he never seemed to

take it for granted that the old ways by which the fathers had walked were good enough, by the mere virtue of their age, for the sons to walk in; and he had that intuitive knowledge of human nature that prevented chiding of the sort that is more likely to do harm than good. The story of Mr. Grant's ministry in Ayr has already furuished material for an interesting volume. With that story I do not deal. Suffice it to say that he was an eloquent, a powerful, an impressive preacher; evangelical, catholic, unmistakable in his sincerity; a very shrewd observer of the drift of events both in the Church and in the world; and that the success of his pastorate was attested by not a few tangible, and by very many intangible, but none the less genuine, tokens of affection. He was loved for his own sake in that he was intensely human, and because he loved his fellow-men.

In Archibald Rae "of Mosside" the ordinary Ayrian may have some difficulty in recognising a man who, in his own sphere, and in all things municipal, parochial, and social, was probably the man in town who was best known in his day and generation; but if he be called "Bailie Rae," then he will forthwith obtain recognition at the hands of a very large circle of old friends and neighbours. For the Bailie was a man of character, of strength, of individuality. He

shone as a magistrate, he shone as a man. There was none who was his equal in repartee; about none other clustered so many good stories. He had both grasp and grip; was masterful, as most strong men are; was humorous, caustic, severe, as he thought the occasion demanded. Municipally he was for many years a power, one of a group of men of outstanding ability who lived just on the borderland of the period when sociality and municipalism went together, when the matitudinal and the midday drams were not yet extinct, when even elders foregathered to quaff the wine of the country in the douce, respectable howfs that were part of their environment, and when apparently, pitting period against period, there seemed to be more occasion for the development of originality and the display of pawky humour than there seems to be nowadays.

However one may try to account for it, these latter days do not seem to be so fruitful in the development of originality as the days were a generation back. Must it be said of them that their more severe temperance conditions have been less fruitful in the development of character in the municipal Kailyard than were the conditions of these "good old times," when life was not such an express train affair as it is now, and when the civic wheels were more lubricated than they now are?

I stay a little at the grave of John Mercer, C.E., for a number of years the burgh engineer, and a man of many good parts, who died when he was fifty-one years old in 1893, to recall a rather curious incident. I have never in any way troubled my head with spiritualism in any shape or form; if I have ever given the matter any consideration at all, the result has been to place me in the ranks of the unbelievers. Indeed, I cannot for the life of me conceive how anybody, having once got quit of this world, should ever desire to revisit it, or to waste his time reciprocating the curiosity of the medium or the blandishments of those who want to pry into the secrets of the other spheres. Concerning the many things of the mystic order that unmistakably have occurred, and that admit of no very satisfactory explanation, I am content with the embracing reflection that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

But to the incident. Early on a fine September morning in 1893 I was lying in the condition known as between the sleeping and the waking. I had been aware that Mr. John Mercer was critically unwell, but he was in no way an intimate friend of mine, and I was not thinking about him. Looking up, I saw him standing at my bedside. He was dressed as I

had last seen him, his face wore a not unaccustomed air of gravity, and his eyes were fixed on me. I made an effort to rouse up, and in the effort I became wide awake; when, needless to say, the vision, or whatever it was, was gone. I was, however, so struck with the appearance — which, by the way, was the second of the same sort within a month or two—that I roused my wife and told her that Mr. Mercer was dead. "How do you know?" she asked. "Because," I replied, "I have seen him. He was here just this minute." And, sure enough, he had breathed his last exactly at the moment I had seen him stand at my bedside.

As the years go on, these old townsmen get swallowed up in the great multitude that no man can number who have gone before. There is John M'Dowall, Ayrshire born and bred and trained, who carried his native shrewdness with him to the Piræus, his gifts, and his resolve to succeed, and who wrought so well in and for the ancient Kingdom of Greece that the King made him a "Sir"; and that without damaging his natural self or sympathies or spoiling him in any way whatever. When Sir John came westward to revisit his old home he found his enjoyment chiefly on the bowling-green and among the remaining friends of his youth, and of all the

throng he was probably the one least changed or affected by success. There is Dr. John Ronald, who was eighty-three years old when he died in 1887, a man of many experiences, surgical, political, and social. His memory went back to the days ere yet chloroform had been discovered, and I have heard him tell an incident that took place in the old Ayr Hospital when he was amputating the leg of a woman just below the knee. The woman sat up and herself held a firm grip on the limb when it was being operated upon. When it came to sewing up the leg the thread got out of the needle, and the surgeon's hands were so bloody that he could not re-thread it. "If," remarked the woman, "you'll catch hold here, I'll thread it for you." And thread it she did.

There is John Reid, who saw fourscore and ten years ere he died in 1899, a man of a highly theological mind, and much concerned in his day and generation for every departure from the faith; highly favoured in that he was not beset with doubts or difficulties, and that he was able to cling to the faith and the doctrines of the fathers without conscious variableness or turning; strong for the literal accuracy and inspired authenticity of everything within the bounds of The Book; a controversalist also, like many other men of the same sort, quick to recognise change in others, and ready to remind them of

the duty of maintaining the ancient landmarks set up by the fathers. There is John Graham, an ex-Bailie and ex-Treasurer of the town, who died in 1896 at the age of seventy-four, a fine example of the Scot of humble parentage who by firmness of character, clearness of judgment, integrity, and self-control succeeded in pushing his way to the front among his fellows; a man who saw things as they were about as well as any of his contemporaries, and who was jealous for his charge with the jealousy that was proof of the single-mindedness with which he tried to serve his day and generation. There is James M'Naughton of Smithfield, who was fourscore and three when he died in 1890, the maker of the first Dundee and Newtyle Railway (1826-1832), and a noted contractor otherwise in his day, a typical Scot for his thoroughness, his singleness of purpose and integrity, his pawky humour, and his readiness to help; whom success injured in nowise, and who retained to green old age that simplicity of character and that capacity for innocent enjoyment that say so much for a well-spent and useful life. There is the Rev. Robert M. Macinnes, who was for thirty-seven years, ending with his death in 1894, the minister of Darlington Place United Presbyterian Church in Ayr; a gifted preacher, fertile in thought, strong of mind; an essentially business man also, who nevertheless found time

for occasional incursions into the realms of language and of poetry; a dissenter who gloried in his dissent, but who never subordinated the ministerial to the controversial. There is William Willock, to whom for many years was entrusted the toast of the "Town and Trade of Ayr"; a specialist in all things ornate, metaphorical and otherwise, concerning the Auld Toon; a man of unexampled eloquence in his own sphere, a singer of sweet songs, and as courtly in his demeanour as man could have been, who passed away in 1899 at the age of seventy-two. There is Robert Goudie, once Provost of Ayr, and wise in his management of the affairs of the ancient burgh in which he had a hereditary pride; for many years Commissary Clerk of the County, and in the later years of his life its Sheriff-Clerk as well; an outstanding Burnsite, deep in his sympathies and eloquent of speech, to whom at many a notable gathering was entrusted the outstanding toast of "The Immortal Memory." Burnsianically, as municipally and socially, he was of the scanty race of the prophets who are honoured in their own country and among their own people; and many a time and oft in graceful diction, and to the delight of large gatherings of his fellow-celebrants, he extolled the genius and the song of the lad who was born in Kyle: a man worthy to be had in remembrance of his day and generation, who closed his career in 1902 at

the age of seventy. And there is Andrew Hunter, "The Dean," long associated with the Municipality, one of the pioneers of Ayr's new departure on the highway of progress and of development: a man of genial, strong, shrewd personality, who recognised the many possibilities that were latent in his native town, who had wisdom to see and faith to know that if only Ayr were well guided she could not do otherwise than assure for herself her rightful place in the race of progress that ensures ultimate prosperity, and who combined with his faith and foresight a strong grasp on the necessity that her civic rulers should take their stand on a sound, practical business foundation, and remember that permanent success can only be attained when the ways that lead to its realisation are wisely chosen as well as vigorously pursued. Mr. Hunter died in 1895 at the age of sixty-four.

Besides these and many more, there is John Pollock, the Town Clerk of Ayr, who, after about twenty years' service in that capacity, died in 1886 at the comparatively early age of fifty. Mr. Pollock was eminently gifted for his life's work. He had that combination of suavity, of tact, of discretion, and of firmness that go, with good practical knowledge and business experience, to make the typical burghal adviser. In Mr. Pollock the "Town" was written large and the "Clerk"

small. He was proud of his appointment. Probably he never tried to analyse his exact personal relation to it; but it worked out in close identification with the burghal rights and prerogatives, with the long continuity of things civic for which he acted as custodian, with a genuine resolve that the town's affairs should not in any degree suffer in his hands, and with a determination to pass on the succession intact and unimpaired. In his hands the burgh never was permitted to invade the private rights of the citizen; was never an instrument for accomplishing, by virtue of its inherent strength and corporate capacity for the exceeding small grinding that is said to be the special attribute of the mills of God, objects or ends to which it was not entitled both in law and in justice; and, as assessor at the Police Courts, the humblest and the most worthless of citizens found in him the watchful protector of his rights. In private Mr. Pollock was one of the most lovable of men, simple in his tastes, fond of Nature and quiet, of the plashing of the waves and the setting of the suns, of a good Scotch song, of a good Scotch story, of recalling the worthies of Auld Ayr who had gone before—their sayings, their doings, their wit and wisdom; those things regarding them that it was prudent to remember, not those things that it was well to forget. Within the same walls, too, sleeps his brother,

William Pollock, long esteemed as a lawyer, as a banker, as a shrewd and wise adviser; a man of gifts and of deep sympathies; strong of intellect and sage of judgment; never self-assertive, but with a personality none the less, that never failed to win recognition in the many counsels to which, by virtue of his wisdom and experience, he was called. He joined the majority in 1904 at the age of sixty-eight.

There are many, many dead here. As for them, no doubt they stand in their lot; as for us, we may take some comfort from the reflection that no good that was ever in them will be allowed to perish, and that as even we, human judges, are fain to blot out those traits in them that we would like to have forgotten, so eternal mercy is not likely to be less tolerant of their earth-bound weakness and frailties. For me, they have passed as a procession passes. And, thinking of them as a whole, I realise how natural it is that with the ongoing of the years there should come forgetfulness of the fathers. It was, so to speak, but yesterday that many of them were here; now they have passed like the swift ships, like the declining shadows, like the voices of the night.

Newton Parish Churchyard

Attached to Newton Parish Church is a very small, badly-kept kirkyard. I understand the

Freemen are responsible for its upkeep; if so, they might well give it more attention than they are doing, cut the grass, remove the weeds, and have a look at the disappearing lettering on the stones that are yielding to the decaying touch of Time's fingers.

I went specially to the churchyard to look for some memorial to Dr. Peebles, the first minister of the parish. Newton was the result of a disjunction from Monkton, and the date on the church is 1776. Dr. Peebles was its first minister. For nearly half a century he ministered within the walls of this kirk, and beyond them in the streets and places of his parish. Strange to say, however, there is no memorial in the shape of tablet or tombstone to his memory, but it is accepted as beyond doubt that he was interred right in front of the pulpit. It is strange, nevertheless, that there is neither mural tablet nor monument to his memory; for all accounts unite in saying that he was eminently worthy of such respect, in life and in death, as his parishioners might have been expected to have paid to his nigh half-century of consistent walk and conversation, and earnest effort in the work of the ministry in Newton.

There is no great reason that one may cite for it; but it is nevertheless the case that of all the ministers of Newton within the last hundred

years or so, none has filled a larger place in public esteem than Dr. Peebles. He was here a long time—that is no doubt one reason. From all accounts that have come down to us, he was an excellent, good man—that is another, and even a better reason. He dabbled in poetry and thereby excited the ire of Robert Burns—that is reason the third, not very substantial, but nevertheless very special. The few anecdotes of him that still hang about the highways and the byways are proof that he was a straight, outspoken man; which is itself a great deal in these years when, as now, there was so much humbug around. And he was the author of the first Statistical Account of Newton-upon-Ayr, a very good account, so far as it goes; a story told by a plain man who wanted to be accurate, and who put down nothing more than what he could have sworn to in a court of justice.

By a story, by his Statistical Account, and by his poetry, one may judge Dr. Peebles. In the story he is a man that one can respect; and towards whom one may, even so far away from him, entertain a feeling of gratitude. In his days the social offender had to make atonement for offending before the whole congregation. There was a girl in the church—it is a commonplace tale this bit of it—who had sinned and who had suffered, and she had to rise in her place in the

kirk and be rebuked in presence of the people. In this case the betrayer came, shameless and unabashed, to hear the rebuke administered; and, glorying in his shame, he seated himself in a prominent place in the church, from whence he could see the girl, and where he could judge for himself as to the faithfulness of the rebuking. The doctor saw him, and the while he spoke words of reproof and counsel and encouragement to the girl, he had the man in his mind, in his thought, and in his intent. His spirit was stirred within him as he noted the superior, supercilious smile of the seducer, and he had the greater pity in his heart for the unfortunate victim of his wiles. So, after he had said his say and bidden the girl sin no more, he rounded full upon the man, and, addressing him by name, he called to him: "Stand up, sir." The man shrank from this notoriety; it was quite other than what he had bargained for, and he would fain just then have had the rocks hide him. Cowardly, he turned to escape, but the gallery was full; none made way for him; all about there were stern, unsympathetic faces, dour, sour looks; and a second time there fell upon the silence and upon his ears the stern command of the minister: "Stand up, sir!" And stand up he did. There was no help for it. Dr. Peebles spake with authority, and having fixed the young man in his place, he opened on

him the vials of his wrath and righteous indignation, and shrivelled him up in the blast of his plain speaking. That is the story. That was Peebles, the man. They called a street after him, and I think he deserved it.

Dr. Peebles' contribution to the Statistical Account is highly matter-of-fact. For a poet, he could get as clean off the back of Pegasus as his neighbours. He could tell how many burgesses there were, after what fashion they voted, how their right of succession was regulated. He knew the exact length, 680 yards, of the main street, that thirty houses had been built in his parish in thirteen years, and that ten of them had been built on the old foundations. He knew how much arable ground there was, and how much common, the rentals that were paid for the turnpikes, how many births there were in the year, how many scholars there were in the schoolhouse, how much water there was in the coal-pits, how much of it was discharged at every stroke of the pumping-engine, what were the wages that were paid in the ropework, in the shipyard, and in the coal-pits. He had a practical eye on the publicans, and on the effect of too frequent use of spirituous liquors on the inhabitants. He interpreted his instructions to be statistical to the letter; the pity is he did not, like many of his co-recorders, let himself go a little and be original.

We should have had fewer figures and details, but more life; and that would have been an advantage. It is only in the last sentence of his narration that he soars at all, and then it is only to say that, because of its health-giving qualities, "this part of the country has, with some justice, been called the Montpelier of Scotland." It is not far to soar; it is not much to say; but it is something to have left a standard of comparison. And writers coming after have complacently, and probably in innocent ignorance, adopted this Montpelier standard and passed it on.

But the prosaic recorder was also the poet. Not very much of that, indeed, as poets go, but still a versifier of a pleasant and smooth character, a singer of the joys of the earth, an invocationist of the moon in the sky, a lingerer upon the leaves of the lily. The grass, the clouds, the summer, the winter, all appealed to him, and concerning them all his versification was smooth and pleasant and flowing. He moralised also, as did the good, pure poets of his day, on life and death, and on the joys of the world to be, and he versified, in the way wonted to Parnassus, the virtues of his friends and patrons and relations. Let me give three short examples of his poetry. First, "The Forsaken Shepherd" thus discourses on the bitterness of his lot:—

"Hail, kindred gloom! subtle shades of night!
Shroud every beauty from my aching sight.
Ye silent groves! no more the sound retain
To soothe the sorrows of the pensive swain!
And ye, my sheep! who oft engaged my care,
Go bleat wild music to the midnight air!
Ye silver waters, as ye roll along,
Bear the sad burden of my mournful song!
Ye gentle breezes, as ye louder rise,
Waft far and wide the whisper of my sighs!
Ye seats of past'ral innocence and grace,
Where all was smiling joy, if ought could please;
And ye, sweet fields, and lawns of verdant hue,
My native home, and every hope, adieu!"

It sounds familiar. Not that we ever read those lines before, but that they are typical of many such lines scattered freely over the rhapsodies of the Nature poets of the period. At the sight of "The Northern Emigrations," better and more truthfully known as "Clearances," Dr. Peebles' patriotism and sense of wrong done to his fellow-countrymen found expression in verses like these:—

"Shall these very sons, unpitied and forlorn,
Be doomed as exiles o'er the world to roam,
From their dear fields and verdant village torn,
Seek the mean shelter of a distant home?

Shall they, the offspring of a warlike race,
Endure the pangs the wretched only know,
And folded close in penury's embrace,
Feel all the sad variety of woe?

Was it for this, with noble ardour fired,
Fought their bold fathers on the hostile plain?
For this the Hero conquered or expired,
While Roman Legions urged their course in vain?"

The level is not high, neither are there any sparks struck, but the spirit is unimpeachable. So also are the purity and the simplicity of this tribute to "Summer"—

"How delightful when evening comes silently on,
To roam o'er the meadows in bloom;
To cull for a garland fresh flowers newly blown,
Or share the bean's richer perfume!

To sit on the margin of yon winding stream
The landscape inverted behold,
Or mark the last glance of the sun's parting beam
And the sky all bespangled with gold."

But enough of "Poet Willie," as Burns called him; he had other things, and better, to do than to write poetry, and he did them so as to leave behind him the good name that is rather to be chosen than silver. They are all gone who knew him. Long since he has gathered his flock about him, but he endures in Newton chronicles as a minister worthy of the long space he filled in the story of the Parish Church.

Beneath the Scottish Episcopal Church

In close proximity to, and within the walls of, the Scottish Episcopal Church in Fullarton

Street, there are a few graves. One cannot look upon this handsome church, the only example of church architecture that Scotland has to show of the work of Pearson, without a certain feeling of regret that it should be placed where it is, and where circumstances render it altogether impossible to see it in all its grace and beauty. It stands on the site of an earlier and smaller building that was sufficient for a generation and more to hold the Episcopalians of Ayr—a church within whose walls ministered for long the Right Rev. William Scott Wilson, LL.D., Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, a man of many good deeds and high piety—but that had to give way to the needs and the enterprise of a growing faith and congregation. It would have been much better had the new church been erected on another and more open site, but this could not be apparently, and it was built in instalments. Its wider and more embracing walls enclose a portion of the little kirkyard, and this is why it has come about that the memorial tablet to which I am going to refer has been placed just where it has been within the walls.

The tablet tells its own story. It marks the resting-place of "Colonel Newcome," that singularly pure and innocent soldier whom Thackeray has immortalised in "The Newcomes." And the inscription runs thus:—

"Sacred to the memory of Major Henry William Carmichael Smyth of the Bengal Engineers, who departed this life at Ayr, 9th September, 1861, aged eighty-one years. 'Adsum.' 'And lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child had answered to his name and stood in the Presence of the Master.—Newcomes, Vol. III., Chapter 26.' On the rebuilding of the church his grave was brought with the walls. He was laid to rest immediately beneath this place by his stepson, William Makepeace Thackeray. This memorial was put up in 1887 by some members of the family."

The Roman Catholic Churchyard

The Roman Catholics of Ayr worship in a handsome church, or chapel, in George Street, Wallacetown, and their old burying-ground, somewhat grass-grown like so many of its neighbours here and there, and giving token of the need for an Old Mortality, is to the rear of the building. The church is the oldest of its kind in Ayrshire. There are indeed churches that in the pre-Reformation days were sacred to the mother kirk, but when Scotland rose in protest against the faith of Rome and drove out the Roman Catholics, these fell in the natural course of events to the Presbyterians. For many long years the Roman Catholics were to

all intents and purposes without chapel or shrine of any sort in the shire. They did indeed in remote corners and unpretentious gathering-places meet occasionally in the fellowship of a common faith, but it was not until the later Irish immigration that they were numerous enough to set about the work of replacing the stone and lime buildings of which they had so long been deprived; and, as far as this county was concerned, a start was made in the county town.

Hither had come a strenuous and a pious priest from the north — from Aberdeenshire — the Rev. William Thomson. Mr. Thomson had his work cut out for him. His flock were few, and, so far as their ownership of this world's goods was concerned, they were also feeble; but he had youth and enthusiasm on his side, and he succeeded in erecting in 1826 the chapel that still does duty for the faithful of the Roman Catholic pale. Since Mr. Thomson's day, the building has been internally much improved. Some three years ago it underwent a complete decorative restoration at the hands of Canon Collings, its present priest, and the general effect is exceedingly good. Through all the scheme runs the sacred story—along the walls of the church, on the altar decorations, in the little chapels, on the windows. To the Presbyterian eye, unaccustomed to the Roman Catholic

regard for the symbolic, the interior loses somewhat in simplicity what it gains in colour effect; but there can be no two opinions as to the completeness of the scheme itself, and the regard for fidelity with which it has been carried out. Mr. Thomson had to be content with a plainer and less ornamental interior, but it has to be said to his credit that he built well when he was about it. As can well be believed, he was a hard worker. But in his case, as in many others, his years were in nowise curtailed by his labours, and he was in the seventy-fifth year of his age and the fifty-second of his priesthood when, in 1859, he was laid to rest behind the church which he had been honoured in erecting.

Not many stories remain of Mr. Thomson. But there is one. Before telling it, however, let me say that in his day the priests in Scotland were not, as a rule, called "Father," as they are now, but "Mr." like their neighbours. One is always learning; and this much I learned on my visit to St. Margaret's, that only those clergymen who belong to one of the Church Orders are strictly entitled to be addressed as Father. The Franciscan, the Carthusian, the Benedictine—each of these is Father. Not so the Jesuit; the Jesuits are not an Order but a Society. In Ireland, however, so many of the priests are members of the Orders that the

people have come in the course of time to call them all Fathers; and even in Scotland the same rule now almost universally obtains. But to the story.

Mr. Thomson was fond of climbing at times to the top of the square tower of St. John's. No doubt it appealed to him. For many long years it had been the tower of the old Catholic Church of Ayr. By long-forgotten men it had been dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Round it clustered the sacred memories of the centuries. Hard by had stood the church with its altars, and in the tower itself the bells had rung their *placebos* and their *diriges* for the rest and quiet of the dead burgesses. High on the tower-top Mr. Thomson was alone. To the westward he could see the gleaming waters of the firth. Carrick Hill rose rounded and reposeful to the south-west. On the southern sky he could see the high top of Shalloch on Minnoch, and, gradually working round, he could return by the east and by the north to where Bute lay, and Arran heaved its peaks to the north-western blue sky. Then, as still, the tower was the home of Mr. John Miller, the Baron of the Fort, and it pleased the Baron well to give the priest access thereto.

It so happened one day that Mr. Thomson had negotiated the winding staircase and had sat him

down on his high altar-top to read, to muse, to enjoy the scene. The Baron forgot all about him, locked the door of the staircase, and went off. It was late in the evening when he returned, and then it was to hear a curious story. Within the walls the ladies of the house had heard mysterious and awe-inspiring noises. It had not been known hitherto that the ancient tower had been haunted, but assuredly within its massive walls something strange, something unaccountable, was moving. The Baron's conscience smote him heavily. The priest! He had locked him in! And forthwith he hurried to effect the liberation of the entombed ecclesiastic. Mr. Thomson was by no means pleased over the misadventure, but he recognised that mistakes will happen in the best regulated society, and after a decent interval he resumed his visits to the tower-top.

"Full of days and merit," as his tombstone says, he died and was buried in the little Catholic churchyard, and there he sleeps, surrounded by not a few of those who knew him when he was alive and were of his devoted flock. There is George O'Brien, who was sixty-five years old when he died in 1880, once a well-known parochialist and School Board member, a man widely esteemed, practical, shrewd, and sagacious; not given to much talking, but always

ready to share his knowledge of the poor among whom he lived with his fellow-members of the St. Quivox Parochial Board. There is John Lockhart, who died in 1886, aged sixty-four, the first drill-instructor of the Ayr Rifle Volunteers, a grave, quiet man, ever mindful of his duty; for a short time a member of the School Board, but much better known in his military capacity and as a genial, all-round, good citizen. And there is Patrick O'Brien, who succeeded Mr. Lockhart as drill-instructor, and carried on the work most effectively. Others also might be mentioned who tenant this quiet God's Acre, but comparatively few of them played any conspicuous part in the life of the town. Now the Roman Catholics have a corner of their own in the cemetery. They sleep there in company, close by their Protestant townsfolk, and I fancy somehow that when it comes to the Resurrection, the church to which the sleepers belonged will have a vast deal less to do with their destiny than the lives they led, the hearts they nurtured, and the good they tried to do by their fellow-men.

The Moravian Churchyard

The Moravian Churchyard in Mill Street is the only churchyard after its sort in Scotland. It is an interesting place of sepulchre this. When the ground was being cleared for the

foundations in 1780 the workmen came upon a considerable quantity of human bones, and when inquiry was made the conclusion was arrived at that the barns of Ayr had stood on or close to this spot, and that these were in all probability the bones of the Englishmen whom Wallace slew when he burned the barns. It is a gruesome story that; one of the many such stories that enable us to see how far we have come since our fathers of Scottish independence were fighting the great battle of freedom. To-day the Turk might burn barns and soldiers in them; and no doubt he would if it suited his purpose, and occasion offered — but ordinary Christian civilisation—no great thing to boast of in some of its aspects—would be aghast at such a method of warfare. There is a time and a place for everything, and that was the time, and the memory is by no means an unpalatable one. The deed was fierce, the deed was cruel, but these were fierce and cruel days; oppression driveth a wise man mad; and it was better to burn the barns, garrison and all, than that Scotland should have been anything else than free.

Where the barns stood rose the Moravian Church, and behind it are buried many of the adherents of this singularly interesting fraternity. So far as this generation is concerned, the best

known of these was Captain John Galloway, who died in 1903. The skipper was a Nathaniel. There was no guile in him. Long had he sailed the high seas, and on many a billow he had been tossed. Among men white and black and brown he had moved for a generation, and had doubtless rubbed shoulders with many a strange character, but his was one of those rare natures that would not spoil. He was in the Town Council for a score of years, and emerged as unsophisticated as man could be. Civic squabbling and rivalry had no more deleterious effect on him than the many social functions at which he was an honoured guest. One could smile at the skipper's innocence, but to laugh at it would have been profane; indeed, in contact with him one felt that he was in touch with a man who had many points of character not possessed by the vast majority of his fellows. When first he was asked to stand for the Town Council: "There's some folks," he told his future constituents, "that think an old sailor like me doesn't know much about business. But harken! I've sailed the finest ships afloat all these years, and I reckon that there isn't a man alive knows the road to and from the East better than I do. D'ye think, with all the experience I've got, I can't understand the business of a place like Ayr?" And then, to show in his own simple way what sort of a man he had been:

"There were no agents in my time in them foreign ports. The captain had to sail the ship; he had to enter her and clear her; he had to sell the cargo and arrange the home freight; and all these years, with all the thousands of pounds passing through my hands, the owners never asked me once for a receipt, and I never gave them one." That was Captain Galloway. Faithful in the least, he was also faithful in that which was greatest. And when he died, his crossing the bar was made the occasion of much demonstration that even in these times, when ultra-simplicity is far from being the rule, it is character that tells. Men do not require to be told that the Captain Galloways are worth having. Where he dwells I cannot tell, but I do know that he is in some land where goodness and godliness come to their own. But not, surely, in that part of the prepared Kingdom where there is no more sea, for only within sound of the roaring of its many waters could Captain Galloway be quite happy.

So much for the Tombs of Ayr, and for those who sleep in them. When That Day comes what an interesting awaking and arising there will be! Early Celtic tribesmen, Roman soldiers, men who saw the crannogs standing in the water and out of the water, warriors who played their part in the struggle for Scottish liberty, fierce

fighters of many a fray, feudalists who harried and raided, stout burgesses who stood in the gate against the enemy, soldiers of the Commonwealth who came hither from the south nor returned again by the way of the Border marches, Cavaliers as well as Roundheads, Covenanters and persecutors, men of changing faiths and creeds, and of varying walk and conversation—these and many more will be there. And it will probably be the occasion of no small surprise to many of them to find how far the judgments of earth have been reversed, and how much of what man regarded as the gold and silver has turned into the hay and stubble in the searching tests of Justice.

THE GENESIS OF THE AYRSHIRE RIFLE VOLUNTEERS

It was in 1859 that the present Volunteer movement, so far as it had to do with Ayr, started; but as far back as 1819 Ayr had its citizen soldiery. There were stormy times then. The incendiary ideas begotten of the French Revolution still leavened a considerable section of the people. Trade had for years been dull, wages were low, and the times generally were hard. In the belief that constitutional reform of a drastic and far-reaching character might accomplish that reawaking of prosperity which all classes equally desiderated, the early Radical movement was started. In Ayr it was taken up zealously. A committee was formed, funds were collected, meetings were held, the wrongs of the people were exploited in language that was regarded by the authorities as dangerous and as tending to provoke rebellion arms were secretly obtained, and arrangements were made for joining the great "rising" which was to accomplish so much, but which fortunately never came off.

The authorities could not do otherwise than

prepare themselves for any possible emergency that might arise, and accordingly troops were drafted into Ayr, and the Ayrshire Yeomanry were called out. The civic guard was strengthened, special constables were sworn in, and a Volunteer corps was enrolled. Locally this corps was known as the Dandies. It consisted of "writers, shopkeepers, and others of the middle and upper classes," and was commanded by Major Campbell of Thornflat, in the parish of St. Quivox. The uniform consisted of a blue single-breasted coat, white drill trousers, and Highland bonnet, being almost identical with the uniform of the 71st Light Infantry Regiment.

Intelligence was brought to Ayr one Sunday morning by a dragoon express that the rebels had risen in the Hamilton district, and orders were given that all the available troops of the regular service should be sent on to the scene of operations without delay. The alarm bells were rung, the drums beat to arms, the churches were emptied, and general consternation reigned in the town. The streets, according to a contemporary writer, were crowded, young and old running and crying in despair, conceiving that the long-threatened general rising had taken place, and that nothing was to be looked for but slaughter and bloodshed. The town presented a most warlike appearance. On every

street was heard the trampling of horses, in every direction there was the sheen of glittering arms and swords; the dragoons were mustered in front of the King's Arms; and at four o'clock in the afternoon the cavalcade, horse and foot, received orders to march for what was believed to be the seat of war. The peace of the town was entrusted to the safe keeping of the Royal Veteran Battalion—the "Fogies," as they were called—and the Dandies. The Volunteers were mustered in the Academy Square, with Major Campbell, a Peninsular and Waterloo officer, in command, and were duly harangued on their responsibilities and on the services that were expected of them in the rugged crisis which had set the country by the ears. That night, and for several nights afterwards, they paraded the town; and no doubt had the incendiary Radicals endeavoured to fulfil their threats, which included an assault upon the town, and specially upon the banks, the Dandies would have been found equal to the occasion. Luckily, however, the extensive preparations that had been made to quell the rebellion sufficed to nip the threatened insurrection in the bud; and after several nights spent in watch and ward over the safety of the royal burgh and the security of the lives and property of the lieges, the Dandies were relieved of

active service, and in due time were discharged altogether. It does not appear, however, that the services they were privileged to render were wholly of an unpleasant or trying description, for "they usually spent the evenings at head-quarters, the Court-house, in card-playing and toddy-drinking." When Major Campbell died, he was buried, with military honours, in the churchyard of Ayr.

Forty years later, the country was menaced by a more serious danger than that of the Radical rising. In 1859 the relations between France and "perfidious Albion" became exceedingly strained, and threats were indulged in across the Channel of an invasion of these shores. There was no doubt as to the sincerity of the French intention, and the Volunteer spirit in Britain spontaneously rose up. By the advice of General Peel, then War Minister, the Government of the day agreed to accept the services of those who might voluntarily offer themselves for the defence of the country; and without promise of pecuniary aid, or even of the expenses entailed in equipment being refunded, such a response was elicited as astonished the world at large, and not least Great Britain herself. As if by magic an armed force rose up. The cost of equipment was not less than £8 per man, and yet, in less than a year from

the first mutterings of the war scare, more than a hundred thousand men, artillery and riflemen, were under arms, and the Queen was able to review, in Hyde Park in London and in the Queen's Park in Edinburgh, two armies of disciplined soldiery numbering in the aggregate over 80,000 men. France ceased to threaten, and the danger of invasion passed; but the Volunteer movement remained. It had come to stay.

It was in October, 1859, that the first indications of a desire to enrol Volunteer corps in Ayr began to evince themselves in the columns of the Press. "There is surely sufficient spirit in our townsmen," wrote an enthusiastic supporter of the movement, "to lead them to emulate the patriotic zeal of their countrymen in other quarters of the land, when a suitable opportunity for doing so is presented to them. If our young men would be something more than carpet gallants, let them vie with each other whose names shall be first on the roll; let them show their manly qualities at drill and on the rifle shooting ground." This appeal to patriotism was not at once responded to. "Minerva," in the person of a correspondent, asked in November what had become of the movement for getting up a corps in Ayr, pointed out that Kilmarnock had already riflemen and proposed to add artillerymen as well, and sneeringly suggested that Ayr might be expected to

follow in the wake of Irvine, Girvan, Maybole, and Stewarton. "Minerva" had not long to wait. A public requisition, influentially signed, was addressed to Provost Kennedy, respectfully asking him to call a public meeting "for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of organising a Volunteer corps in Ayr"; and the Provost, giving effect to the wishes of the requisitionists, called a meeting for the evening of Monday, 21st November.

The Assembly Rooms were densely crowded by a representative audience. The Provost, who presided, struck a responsive key-note. "It would, I think, be difficult," he said, "to exaggerate the importance of the object for which this meeting has been called, or to remain unmoved by the attitude which, in consequence of the threatening aspect of Continental affairs, this country is rapidly assuming." Invasion the Provost regarded as an early possibility, and as a future certainty unless it were warded off by the courage and patriotism of the people. Let the nation arm, and then "no emperor, no general, no people, unless bereft of their senses, would ever dream of attempting to invade our shores or venture upon an enterprise of so dangerous, so desperate a nature as to attack a powerful nation when thoroughly prepared to defend itself." The speakers who followed have all quitted the scene

of earthly strife. They were Mr. J. D. Boswell, Bailie Paterson, Bailie Ronald, Mr. Gavin Gemmell, Mr. H. C. Gray, Mr. James Martin, Mr. R. A. Miller, Rev. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. William Macrorie and Mr. John Kinloch. The language of all breathed the common enthusiasm and resolve. "Surely," Bailie Ronald said, amid the answering cheers of the audience—"surely they would not be behind their forefathers in military ardour. Napoleon once called them a nation of shopkeepers, but he found that they dealt in powder and ball as well as other commodities. Perhaps," he added, "we will again teach the same lesson to our Continental friends. If they do come, they will find us prepared to shoulder our rifles and march to the battle-field, to protect our Queen from danger, our native land from rapine, and our wives and children from the atrocities of a foreign soldiery." "Is not," asked Mr. H. C. Gray, "our country worth fighting for — a country that stands pre-eminent among the other nations of the earth for its deeds of daring and of greatness, and has excited alike their envy and their hatred, as being the asylum of the alien, the home of the oppressed, and the bulwark of civil and religious freedom?" The resolutions (1) in favour of perfecting the national defences, (2) in favour of starting a Volunteer

corps in Ayr, and (3) appointing the necessary committee, were carried amid great cheeeing. Mr. Gavin Gemmell and Mr. William Macrorie were the joint-secretaries.

A second meeting, "of artisans and mechanics," was held in the Corn Exchange, Mr. D. M. Lyon, later on the historian of Freemasonry and the Secretary of Grand Lodge, in the chair, and was addressed by a deputation from the acting committee. Artillery Volunteers, it was explained, would be admitted on payment of £1, and riflemen on payment of £2 10s. The response was in every way satisfactory: by the beginning of December, the Lord-Lieutenant of the County, the Earl of Eglinton and Winton, had forwarded to the War Office the names of fifty-eight Volunteer artillerymen and eighty-one riflemen.

Early in January, 1860, the corps met under the presidency of Mr. Robert Paton, ship-owner, for the purpose of adopting a code of rules based on a model sanctioned by Government, and recommending to the Lord-Lieutenant a staff of officers. Without opposition, the following recommendations were made: Major Hay Boyd of Townend, captain; Robert Paton, ship-owner, lieutenant; James Martin, Inspector of Taxes, ensign; Robert Dobbie, M.D., surgeon. Of thirteen candidates nominated for sergeants, the

following were elected by a majority of votes: William Cowan, wine merchant; David Hunter, grain merchant; Robert Gray, law agent; Alexander Paton, Macnairston; and Robert Howie Smith, *Express* Office. Mr. Cowan, in virtue of his position at the top of the poll, was appointed Colour-Sergeant. The other non-commissioned officers were: Matthew Adam, shoemaker; James Murray Ferguson, tobacconist; P. B. Hill, fishmonger, and Walter Stewart, commission agent, corporals; T. Nisbet, draper, and W. Helmrich, druggist, lance-corporals; Hugh Reid, bugler.

It was on 14th March of the same year that the riflemen were sworn in by Sheriff-Substitute Robison. On that interesting occasion, the men donned for the first time their new uniforms, and as they marched along Sandgate, headed by the band of the Ayrshire Rifles, the street was crowded with interested spectators, anxious to see how the "military civilians" looked. The ceremony over, and the Sheriff having spoken a few words of congratulation and advice, the corps proceeded to Burns' Cottage by way of the Race-course, and returned to town by the Monument Road. "The unanimous opinion," according to an observer, "was highly favourable."

The early months in the history of the

Ayr Rifles were comparatively uneventful. The officers were invited to attend a Royal levee in London, and had the honour of presentation to the Queen. The Ayr Band, which for some reason or other it was found difficult to maintain, handed in its instruments, and these were given to the Volunteers for the purpose of inducing them to have a band of their own. Some of the more enthusiastic and less thoughtful members of the corps went practising firing in the fields, fortunately without any more serious result than exposure in the columns of the local press. The Earl of Eglinton, true to that public spirit which animated all his conduct towards every good movement, encouraged the Volunteer movement by the presentation of prizes for competition to the Ayrshire Volunteers. So highly gratified were the Ayr men with the services of their drill-instructor, Sergeant Lockhart, that they entertained him to dinner and presented him with a handsome testimonial. Thus, and in many another fashion, grew the Volunteer rifle movement in Ayr and prospered, the while, too, corps sprang up in every town in the shire and in many of the villages, till there was not a district in the county that had not its quota of citizen soldiery.

By the time August came round, and the great Review took place in the historic Queen's Park of

Edinburgh, hard by the old home of the Scottish sovereigns, Ayrshire was able to contribute an entire battalion of riflemen and half a battalion of artillery. A member of the rifle corps contributed to the Press a graphic account of the great Review. "When the Ayr men reached Edinburgh it was twenty minutes to three o'clock. The spirits of the travellers had been sorely tried. They did not get out of Ayr till half-past eight o'clock. By the time they reached Paisley they were nearly an hour behind time, and after that, crept along at a rate that would have done discredit to a stage coach. The sun beat down on them pitilessly as they hastened along Princes Street in the direction of the Queen's Park. They were hot and dusty when they reached the scene of action and looked upon the splendid concourse. They lost their rightful place in the march; but in due time they found themselves, their hearts going pit-a-pat, advancing across the front of the Grand Stand, about the centre of which Her Majesty's carriage was stationed. The Ayrshire Battalion was under the command of Major Hay Boyd.

"At first there was a slight wavering in our ranks, but we soon recovered ourselves. Two thousand five hundred men had gone before us, but as the Irvine and Ayr companies marched past with great steadiness and straightness of

line, silence was first broken by the officers near Her Majesty with a 'Well done, Ayrshire!' 'Bravo, Ayrshire!' at which Her Majesty waved the programme which she held in her hand, and the ladies and gentlemen in the Grand Balcony gave unmistakable cheers. This recognition thrilled us amazingly. We had received orders to look straight in front; but being on the right, and within two or three paces of the Royal carriage, I stole a passing glance at Her Majesty. Almost at the instant, however, a blinding cloud of dust blew direct into my eyes, as if to rebuke me for disobeying orders. But I had seen enough to imprint the Queen's features on my memory."

It was ten o'clock at night ere the Ayr contingent were under way for home. Somewhere about two a.m. of the next morning Paisley was reached, and Dalry an hour and a half later; and it was a quarter past five in the morning when the train steamed into Ayr. "Where," asked the Volunteer scribe—"where is the other railway company in the kingdom that will match this? Bravo, Ayrshire, again!"

Major Hay Boyd did not long remain Captain of the Ayr Company. In October he was gazetted Major of the Ayrshire Battalion, and Lieutenant Paton was unanimously elected Captain in his stead, Ensign Martin being appointed to the vacant Lieutenancy, and Colour-

Sergeant Cowan to the vacancy caused by the promotion of Ensign Martin. All the non-commissioned officers obtained a step in advance, and Private John Adam, junr., was made lance-corporal.

The close of the first year of Volunteering in the ancient burgh was celebrated by a ball that took place in the County Hall. Upwards of two hundred ladies and gentlemen were present, and the beautifully decorated suite of rooms presented a picturesque scene of great animation. The Volunteer motto, "Defence, not Defiance," was on scroll of silver in front of the orchestra, and conspicuous among the other ornamentation were the familiar letters "V.R.," the national "Nemo me impune lacessit," and the burgh arms. "Auld Ayr," an enthusiastic guest declared, "furnished a large array of its bonnie lasses, and several other districts were laid under tribute for some of their choicest gems. Nor were the best efforts of art awanting to set off to advantage the profuseness of natural beauty. We need not add that our Volunteers in their fine uniforms were the types of manliness and gallantry." It was between five and six o'clock in the morning when the company broke up.

Such, so far as the town of Ayr was concerned, was the genesis of the great Volunteer movement. We must now turn, though not in equal detail—

for the initiatory essentials were necessarily of the same character in all the towns and villages of the county—to the rise of the movement in Ayrshire generally.

Kilmarnock, as we have seen, had the honour of leading the way, and Irvine had followed close behind. "Auld Killie" had obtained the distinction of having its company made No. 1 of the Ayrshire Battalion, and Irvine with No. 2 had opened the way to the No. 3 of the county town. While the preliminary agitation was going on in Ayr, the smaller places were being similarly urged to a practical manifestation of their patriotism. The fathers of the grey capital of Carrick had laid their heads together, and were considering ways and means. The men of the bonnet centre of Stewarton were being conjured to act as if the voice of Wallace were sounding its martial accents in their ears. Newmilns was being urged, even to death, to preserve the sanctity of home, country, and religion. "Do we require incentives?" these men of the upper waters of Irvine were asking themselves. "See," was the reply—"see Loudon Hill—the martyrs' mighty tombstone—beckoning us on to behold Drumclog, where rest the ashes of those whose blood dyed the mountain heath—

> "Unbought be the hand that we raise in the strife,
> And the sword that we brandish, our own."

In the case of Newmilns, however, the appeal fell on deaf ears; for it was not for twenty years that it was responded to by the formation of a rifle corps. The enthusiasm in Beith found expression at a public meeting in a series of perfervid declamations. "We have all British blood in our veins," said the chairman, Mr. Sheddon of Morrishall, "and that is enough." But he had more to say than that. Given a Volunteer corps, "we would be all good fellows well met. It would be conducive to the health of our young men, improve their figures, and if it tended to nothing else, it would raise them at least in the estimation of the other sex; and, in short, it would be the best gymnastic exercise I know, and next to our national game of curling." The speech of the evening was made by Mr. Brown of Broadstone, who indulged copiously in poetical quotation; but a more characteristic utterance was that of Mr. William King, who put the necessity for self-defence in a nutshell. "The fact of the matter is this, every man has a throat to cut, and it is to be in a position to defend these, if need be, that every able-bodied man is called upon. When a rich man's throat is cut, he is just as poor as his neighbour." In addition to the local oratory of the evening, the patriotism of the audience was stimulated by a poem written by a near friend of his own, a lady.

Space must be found for the first and last of the five double verses that comprised the tribute of the Muse—

"Away with the Cricket-bat, Football, and Quoit!
Away with the Target and Bow!
In the use of the rifle be each man adroit,
Lest Fate chance to send us a foe.
We wish to be neutral, and so does the Queen,
God bless her by sea and by land,
But as by past trials forewarned we have been,
Forearmed it is prudent to stand.

God gave our religion, our country, our homes,
Our families loving and good,
And we'll fight to defend them if treachery comes
Till we shed the last drop of our blood.
'Tis not for ambition or conquest we arm,
'Tis not money or plunder we prize,
But let an invader dare threaten us harm,
Point the rifle! The miscreant dies."

In Girvan, where the preliminary public meeting was held in the latter days of 1859, the speech of the evening was entrusted to that perfervid Burnsite and patriot, the Rev. P. Hateley Waddell. Unfortunately, the Press has not preserved anything but a summary of the reverend gentleman's speech Willing, if need be, he declared, to endure persecution, he would no more surrender his wife and children to an enemy than he would to a wild beast; and our best protection was a quick-set hedge of bayonets with a reasonable amount of ammunition

behind it. He would not, he said in closing, enrol his name, "but if there is the least occasion," cried he, "send me a musket"—a declaration that was followed by great cheering. Mr. Walter Andrews, banker, followed in the same vein. He was rather old to use a rifle, he declared, but he was not too old to buy one, and he would do it cheerfully.

Early in January the Maybole corps, with eighty members and £200 of money subscribed, was under way, and had its officers chosen — Mr. David Brown, writer, captain; Mr. William Murray, writer, lieutenant; Mr. Thomas Austin, ensign; Dr. Girvan, surgeon to the corps; and Mr. Richard Parkinson, bugler. The Rev. John Thomson, of the West Church, was elected chaplain. The enthusiasm of Carrick was not confined entirely to Maybole and Girvan. In the extreme south, in the valley of the Stinchar, the same patriotic spirit was manifested, and the 8th Company of Ayrshire Volunteers was duly formed. The officers, as gazetted in May, were Anthony Thomson, gent., to be captain; William MCulloch, gent., to be lieutenant; Alexander D. M'Ilwraith, jun., gent., to be ensign. On the formation of the corps a silver medal for annual competition was presented by Mr. Rigby Wason of Corwar, and swords were publicly presented to the officers by their friends in the town of Girvan. The

presentation was succeeded by a dinner, and the more substantial part of the dinner by an outflow of eloquence not uncharacteristic of Girvan. The physical fitness of the officers was spoken to by Bailie M'Clymont. "God pity the poor Frenchman or Russian," he exclaimed, "who may ever come within the sweep of their arm!" "Should their flat bottoms in darkness get o'er," he added, "they would never venture to approach Girvan. Napoleon knows what reception he would meet in the best fighting parish in the land. But should that day ever arrive, the Girvanites are bound to cover themselves with imperishable renown." Needless to say, these, and similar sentiments, were received with rapturous cheering. But it was not until a later period of next year that the company in Girvan itself had really been formed. By this time the strength of the two branches of the Volunteer force in Ayrshire was upwards of 1,000, and the Marquis of Ailsa had been gazetted Lieutenant-Colonel of the Rifles. The appointment of the great Carrick peer appears to have stimulated afresh the zeal of the Girvanites, and in September the corps was formed and the officers were gazetted—10th Company (Girvan), Ayrshire, William Cunninghame Cunninghame, Esq., to be captain; William Brown, gent., to be lieutenant; John James Moncrieff Blair, gent., to be ensign. Two days later, on 24th October,

Major James Hay Boyd was gazetted major of the Ayrshire Battalion.

The troubles of the Girvan corps were not altogether at an end when the names of the officers were published in the *Gazette*. Captain Cunninghame had hardly assumed office ere he was reluctantly forced to resign. A meeting of the company was at once held, the resignation was received with expressions of the most profound regret, and then Lieutenant Brown was chosen captain. By a majority Mr. John Graham was appointed lieutenant, and Ensign Blair resigned. These initiatory difficulties, however, were in due time overcome, and the Girvan company proceeded to qualify, and took its place worthily in the Ayrshire Battalion.

In 1879 the Ayrshire Battalion numbered fifteen companies, and the War Office the following year constituted them two battalions—the 2nd with its headquarters at Ayr. This arrangement was maintained till 1887. The last order to the 2nd Ayrshire was issued on the 5th of October of that year; by 22nd December the battalion had become what it still remains, the 2nd Rifle Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

It is not the purpose of this sketch to pursue the detailed history of the Rifle Volunteer movement in Ayrshire further. The aim has been to

furnish, so far as the materials at hand permitted, a comprehensive historic account of the early days of the movement itself; to indicate the nature of its origin and the reasons which contributed to it; and to recall the patriotic and martial spirit which transformed many thousands of civilians into soldiers, and for ever dispelled the danger of the invasion of these shores. Amid many difficulties the force was laboriously built up. What it is to-day the world knows: a splendid illustration of British capacity to meet emergency and to rise to any eventuality that hostile circumstances may beget.

But we cannot part with a subject of such great interest and of such importance, without recalling the memorable year of 1881, when the Volunteer movement had come of age, and when, once again, in the Queen's Park of Edinburgh, the same Queen reviewed the citizen soldiery of Scotland. Not, however, of Scotland alone; for London Scots were there, marching in the front of the force, and contingents were present from merry Carlisle and from the border counties. In earlier days in the nation's history these English borderers might not have crossed the fighting line on such peaceful errand; but fortunately the changed times and the better epoch have extinguished the fires of national jealousy, and none were more heartily welcomed to the

modern Athens than the men of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Durham.

Ayrshire, as a matter of course, was represented in the dense throng of more than 40,000 Volunteers who marched through the rain and the slush that August day of 1881. The 1st Ayrshire and Galloway Artillery mustered 581 strong, the 1st Ayrshire Rifles 87 strong, and the 2nd Ayrshire 88.

It was half-past five in the morning when the train carrying the Ayr contingent steamed out of the station, and it was nearly three o'clock the following morning when the Volunteers were once more deposited in the townhead. They had had an eventful day of it, a wearisome day, a day of heavy grey skies and continuous rain. Apart altogether from its national character and the great doings of the Queen's Park, that 25th of August was memorable for the manner in which the windows of heaven were opened. If the men of twenty-one years before had been parched with heat and broiled by an unsympathetic sun, those of 1881 were beat upon by the pluvial deities after a fashion they could never forget. When they reached Edinburgh the skies were threatening, but the hope that springs eternal was still cherished. Cherished, alas! in vain, for long before the Review began the rain had set in. It flooded

the streets, it turned Hunter's Bog into a quagmire, the once green turf on which the men marched by their Sovereign was converted into a slippery pulp. The Volunteers and the myriad thousands of spectators who thronged every vantage-point, and clustered like bees amid the rocks and on the steep slopes of Arthur's Seat, were drenched as completely as if they had been dipped in the sea. Nature was profusely, distressingly uncharitable.

And yet the Review was a great sight, and a memory to be cherished. There were Volunteers there from all parts of Scotland. Some of them had left their homes in the Highlands the day previous. The grey north vied with the land of border stream and song in responding to the summons to wait upon the Queen, and the citizen soldiers of the shires and shores washed by the German ocean stood side by side with their comrades and compatriots from the counties on the Atlantic seaboard. The cities were represented by their thousands ; the small towns, the villages, and the country districts—all had their quota. The writer had the advantage of a position of observation close to the carriage where the Queen sat patiently under the dripping sky, and the scene that evolved stands out distinct in imperishable memory. There was gun-fire, and then the march began : the

march of a bigger army than that which wrested from England the independence of Scotland on the field of Bannockburn. From the capacious mouth of Hunter's Bog, through an atmosphere rendered close and foggy by the weather, they came—the Scottish Volunteers. The spectacle was less brilliant, but not less impressive than it would have been had the sun been on high. In close marching order, column upon column, shoulder to shoulder, the men kept pressing on, maintaining a steadiness that in the circumstances was wonderful. The Ayrshire contingent were in the third column, with the representatives of Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Dumfriesshire, and Galloway. Despite their long wait in the bog, the second Ayrshire battalion came up fresh and lithe, with springing step, and marching without the slightest appearance of constraint. Their demeanour was well remarked on in the neighbourhood of the Stand; and that, too, though praise had almost begun to pall with reiteration. It took an hour and a half of constant, quick marching ere the rear of the force passed the Royal standard; then a solitary gun spoke, and the Review was over.

The home-coming need not be dilated upon. The trains were late, the carriages were crowded, everybody was wet, wearied, and glad the great day had come to an end. But there was no

murmuring, save over the discomforts of the hour, for the feeling was universal that there had been a privilege enjoyed in taking part in the proceedings of a day that was epoch-making in the history of Volunteering, and in the relation in which the Volunteers themselves stood to the Sovereign of the realm. Grey morn waited at Ayr the arrival of the troops; and all over Scotland through the darkness of that eventful night the trains sped with their contingents of wearied men.

From the beginning of the movement down till now the progress of the battalion has been steadily in the right direction. Its interests have been conserved and attended to with unfaltering care and unwearied unselfishness. It has been a good moral factor to thousands of men who have served in the ranks, and it has leavened Ayrshire with a considerable proportion of citizens who, should emergency arise, would readily and gladly respond to the call to arms. It has been kept alive by motives of the purest and most patriotic character, and it presents to-day a solidarity and a tangible expression of permanence that give assurance of a prosperous and long continued future.

THE COUNTY IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

THERE were many troublous times in Ayrshire and in the county town in the olden days, and shire and burgh alike never seem to have turned their backs upon their responsibilities when they had to speak with the enemy in the gate. We have already told how Ayr fared in the stormy years that preceded the Second Reformation, and how the county suffered at the hands of the Highland Host. The three sketches that follow touch the story at three critical and interesting periods in the nation's history, and although they are separated, in point of years, by long intervals, they are all alike in demonstrating that the forefathers were constant in season when perils threatened or befell.

SIR WILLIAM WALLACE IN THE DAWN OF THE FIGHT FOR SCOTLAND'S LIBERTY

In the year 1802 there was issued from the *Air* press of J. & P. Wilson, for A. M'Goun, Glasgow, a substantial volume in verse, that bore this lengthened and somewhat discursive title—"The History of the Life and Adventures

and Heroic Actions of the Renowned Sir William Wallace, General and Governor of Scotland, wherein the old obscure words are rendered more intelligible, and adapted to the understanding of such as have no leisure to study the meaning and import of such Phrases without the help of a Glossary, by William Hamilton." Mr. Hamilton's "greatest motive" in thus re-telling the story as recorded by Barbour was, he says in his preface, "to make the history of an ancient hero intelligible to the age he lived in, in order to form their minds to virtue by setting so glorious a model before their eyes."

It was, according to this most crude and yet rather forcible—indeed, sometimes much too forcible—poet, when Wallace was fishing in Irvine water that he first came into conflict with the English in Ayrshire. He had made a good basket when the Lord Percy and his court rode by. Five of the Englishmen detached themselves from the escort and crossed over to the river's bank where Wallace was fishing. One of them emptied his basket of its contents, and when Wallace remonstrated, "Faith!" cried the Southron, "thou deserv'st a blow; poor prating Scot, how darest thou talk so?" What followed is thus told—

> "Then at him runs, and out his sword does draw,
> But Wallace's poult-staff kept the rogue in awe.

That trusty tree, as the poor scoundrel found,
Laid him and sword both quickly to the ground.
Wallace the sword caught fast into his hand,
Which did the saucy fellow soon command;
Then a back stroke most cleverly he gave,
His neck in two most cleanly there he clave.
The other four, alighting from their horse,
Do him attack with all their strength and force,
Yet tho' they him surround on every side,
With handy blows he paid them back and side.
Upon the head so fierce he struck at one,
The shearing sword cut through his collar-bone.
Another on the arm, that stood near by,
He struck, till hand and sword on the field did lie.
Three slew he there, two fled with all their might
Unto their horse in a confounded fright."

After that Wallace concluded that there was a strong chance of the locality proving too hot for him, so he repaired to Ayr, then dominated by the English garrison under Lord Percy. Among the Englishmen who were in Percy's train was "a huge English fellow"—

"Who greatly bragged of his prodigious strength,
Which cost him dear, as you shall hear at length.
A greater burden, said the prince of sots,
He'd bear than any three good sturdy Scots,
And with a staff like a stage-dancer's pole
For one poor groat he would permit and thole
The strongest man to beat him on the back,
So imprudently did the carle crack;
Which story, when it came to Wallace's ear,
To smile and laugh he scarce could well forbear.
He told the fellow that he would be willing
For one Scotch blow to give an English shilling.

The greedy wretch did freely condescend,
Which quickly brought him to a fatal end,
For Wallace gave him such a dreadful thump
Upon the bone, close by his great fat rump,
That, to the view of all were present there,
He clave his rig-bane, and he ne'er spake mair.
Thus died the wretch for a poor price and small,
And his great English hurdies paid for all."

The result, as might have been expected, was to bring the English about Wallace, with their swords drawn. But—

" He, no ways dashed, did his steel bonnet cock,
And struck a Southron with that trusty tree,
Out o'er the head, till brains and bones did flee;
Then cleverly, with such good-will and luck,
On the steel bayonet hath another struck,
Till, tho' the noble tree it split and rave,
He killed the fellow and turned to the lave.
Then with an awful grace he made a paw,
And out his sword with majesty did draw,
Which cleared his way like a true friend indeed,
And quickly helped him to a sturdy steed.
Two doughty fellows there that grieved him most
He dous'd their doublets rarely to their cost,
His anger kindled, to such height it grew,
With one good stroke the foremost there he slew.
A blow he got upon the other knave,
His good sword down right through his body clave."

Wallace made his escape, leaving the five dead Englishmen lying on the street. But he was not so easily daunted that he could be persuaded to give Ayr a wide berth; and in due time, accordingly, back he came. The Sheriff of

Ayr, Sir Rannald Wallace, had sent his servant out to the market to buy some fish for the dinner, and he was carrying it home, when Percy's steward came upon the scene and tried to take it from him. Wallace, who was standing by, interposed, and the steward, incensed at his interference, struck him with his staff.

"Then Wallace by the throat him quickly caught,
And the proud steward better manners taught;
Then from his pocket pulled a dagger knife,
Which robbed the foolish coxcomb of his life."

At once Wallace was surrounded by fourscore Englishmen, and thus he demeaned himself:—

"At them he stared and never spoke a word,
But boldly drew his awful daring sword;
And cleverly unto his feet did get,
And stick'd the foremost fellow that he met.
Upon the knee another cut he so,
That moment made the bone asunder go.
Nor can I say the third had better luck,
Who got his neck in two most cleanly cut.
Thus Wallace raged and ramped lion-like,
And made the carles strangely fidge and fyke.
No wonder, for they gat most grievous wounds.
So desp'rately he clawed their South'ron crowns;
And tho' the gate with sword and spears they keep,
He hew'd them down like heartless, silly sheep."

But though Wallace struggled and fought most desperately, one man was ill-matched against fourscore. With his back against a wall, he slaughtered and he slew, till his sword brake in his hand. He drew his dagger—

"One there he kill'd, and other two he sent
To death, the same way that the first two went."

It was all in vain, however, for they so beset him that he could fight no more, and was taken captive. So incensed were the Englishmen that they resolved to starve him to death in prison. So they clapped him into the Castle, which, says the poet, "much resembled hell."

"Such meat and drink as they to him allow
Would kill and poison even a very sow.
And here I leave him in this doleful case
Till Providence shall order his release."

Wallace was not fated to end his days in the Castle of Ayr for the killing of Percy's steward. He had much to do ere yet he should close his career at the hands of the English. But he came very near dying in the Castle none the less. It was no wonder that, wounded and stricken as he was, he grew weaker and weaker.

"Herrings and water for his nourishment,
And such sad stuff to Wallace they present.
Instead of what was wholesome, cleanly food,
Got the refuse of everything was good."

Thus deprived of the necessaries of life, he confessed his sins, asked the Almighty to receive his soul, closed his eyes, and went off into a swoon that so closely resembled death that all who looked upon him concluded that he had died. The Englishmen, not caring to be troubled with his body, threw him over the wall,

and he landed upon what the poet calls "a place was soft." Tradition has it that it was a refuse heap, or a midden, and as these were abundant in Ayr for hundreds of years after Wallace, in the very highest and most populous places of the town, there is no reason to doubt, given the truth of the story, that Wallace landed on a compost heap of the most heterogeneous sort. Here he was found by his old nurse, who had him borne to her own house. As she was bathing what she took to be his corpse, he returned to life, and by careful nursing was brought back to health and activity, and made his escape from the town to renew his warfare upon the Southrons. In due time, however, he returned in disguise with a small band of associates, and at the gate he encountered an English fencer who challenged him to a bout at arms. The result was what might have been expected.

"'Smite on,' he said, 'thy nation I defy,'
Wallace therewith a fleg at him let fly.
The sword so fell was on the buckler cast,
Clean through his harns it to his shoulder past."

A tumult followed. The women cried "Our fencer's slain," and soon eightscore English men-at-arms beset Wallace and his fifteen.

"Eightscore at once upon sixteen they set,
But Wallace quickly with the foremost met,
And lent him with good-will a fearful blow
That through the helmet shattered all his pow.

Syne struck another so, the breast aboon,
The sword went clean throughout th' unsonsy loon.
Great room he made, so did his trusty men,
Till many a feckful chiel that day was slain."

From the Castle gates more Southrons came to join in the unequal fight; and Wallace, not more brave than wise, resolved to retreat.

"Then through the throng as by main force he past,
Their harns and heads asunder hew'd he fast.
Himself returned the hindmost in the rear
Till he had brought his men quite out of fear.
Then to their horse they went, thereafter rode
For better safety to the Lagland Wood.
Twenty-and-nine they slew in that day's feed
Of Southron men that nevel'd were to dead."

The next time that Wallace returned to Ayr was after the massacre of the Scottish chiefs in "the bloody barns." Enticed to Ayr upon false pretences, the chiefs were taken one by one into the barns, ropes were cast about their necks, and "such a slaughter-house was never seen."

"Sir Rannald first, that ancient knight comes in,
And then the bloody murder does begin.
A running cord they slipped o'er his head,
Then to the baulk they hauled him up dead;
Sir Bryce the Blair, after Sir Rannald past,
The cruel dogs to death him hastened fast,
No sooner enters than he's in the snare,
And on the bloody baulk was hanged there.
A gallant knight, Sir Neil Montgomery,
Was hanged next, such pity was to see.
Great numbers more landed men about
Went in alive, but none at all came out.

The Wallaces and Crawfords, stout like steel,
Great cruelty from barb'rous Southrons feel;
The Kennedys of Carrick slew they als',
And the kind Campbells that were never false,
Nor did rebel against the righteous Crown,
For which the Southrons hang'd and hew'd them down.
The Barclays, Boyds, and Stewarts of good kin,
No Scot escaped that time that entered in.
Thus eighteenscore to death they put outright,
Of barons bold and many a gallant knight;
Then, last of all, with great contempt and scorn,
Cast out the corpse, naked as they were born."

Wallace was himself on his way to Ayr to company with the barons who had come to so untimely an end, when a woman accosted him at Kingcase, and told him the sad news. It was little the time that he spent in mourning. Without loss of time he joined his men, three hundred good and true, in the Lagland Wood, and they resolved on taking instant vengeance. The woman herself chalked the doors of the houses where the Englishmen were residing, and she supplied Wallace and his followers with flax, fire, and all combustibles. These were piled round about the barns, where many of the Southrons lay "all so drunk with wine, they're now in deep sleep sunk," and the torch was applied.

"The conflagration shined so clear and bright,
'Is not,' said Wallace, 'this a pleasant sight?
Our former wrongs this will in part redress,
When they are gone their power will be the less.'
With that the fiery flames ascend aloft,

To sleeping folk such wakening was not soft ;
The sight without was terrible to see,
Then guess what cruel pain within might be,
Which to the bloody monsters then befell,
Next to the torments I may say of hell.
The buildings great were all burned down that night,
Nor there escaped squire, lord, or knight.
When great, huge roof-trees fell down them among,
O, such a sad and melancholy song !
Some naked burnt to ashes all away,
Some never rose, but smothered where they lay ;
Other attempting to get to the air,
With fire and sword were burnt and choked there.
Their nauseous smell none present could abide ;
A just reward—for murder will not hide.
With sorrow thus and many a grievous groan,
They languish'd till their sinful days were gone.
Some sought the door, endeavouring out to get,
But Scotsmen there so wisely did beset,
Out of the burning flames whoever got,
Immediately was cut down on the spot,
Or driven back with fury in the fire,
Such wages got these hangmen for their hire."

The example of speedy and of bloody vengeance thus set by Wallace was not lost upon Drumlaw, the friar of Ayr. Sevenscore Southrons had been quartered upon him in various parts of the town ; and, calling his seven brother ecclesiastics, he encased them in English armour and gave each of them a sword.

"These eight brave friars to sundry places go,
With sword in hand to every house went two,
Wherein the bloody, drunken Southrons were,
And them despatched as they lay sleeping there.

Some did awake into that doleful case,
Who naked fled, and got out of the place,
Some water sought, confus'dly through their sleep,
Then drown'd in the friars' well, both large and deep.
Thus slain and drowned were all that lodged there,
Men call it since the Friars' Blessing of Air."

According to the poet, the slain that night, in the barns, in the Castle, in houses, on the streets of Ayr, numbered five thousand. Attempts have been made to cast discredit on the whole story, but without avail. It is inconceivable that such an event should have been wholly conceived in the brain of a romancist; and, while the details are doubtless imaginary and fanciful, the fact may be accepted that, in revenge for the massacre of the Scottish chiefs, Wallace did indeed retaliate upon the Southrons in kind. The barns are supposed to have stood in Mill Street, and it is worth bearing in mind that when, in the end of the eighteenth century, the ground there was opened to receive the foundations of the Moravian Church, the workmen found great quantities of charred bones; and those who looked upon them said, one to another, that these were the bones of the Englishmen slain that fateful night when "the barns of Ayr burned weel."

Ayr during the Jacobite Troubles

Whatever romance may do, in song or in story, to keep alive the memory of a lost cause, neither

in the one direction nor in the other is it potent enough to weigh in the balance against those material considerations that influence the people of a country in the testing hour of national trial or trouble. Romance did a great deal for the house of Stuart, and for the Jacobite cause. The standard on the Braes of Mar was up and streaming rarely in honour of the Chevalier St. George, because the Highland heart warmed to the old house that had been centuries identified with Scotland in good and in evil report, and men gave their lives in the vain hope of the restoration of the Stuart dynasty; but the nation, as a whole, prosperous and contented, chose the material and let the romance stand on the one side. That was in 1815 and 1816.

Thirty years later, romance enshrined Prince Charlie in a halo. It spoke of him, it sang of him, it idolised him; and again Highland clansmen flung themselves in vain upon the thick bosses of the Southern shield for the young Chevalier and the old love; but again the people, as a whole, still thriving, steeled their hearts against the representative of a royal race that had forgotten everything and learned nothing, and which, in its last throned heads, had tyrannised over its subjects and attempted the impossible task of enslaving the conscience of a people that had tasted the sweets of liberty and

breathed the airs of freedom. Scotland could not but remember the past, when these two "risings" were precipitated on the country. In 1716, men not much past middle age could recall the bleaching heads and the bloody scaffolds of the persecution; and even in 1745 there were many old men left who had not forgotten these terrible years, suggestively and all too truthfully known as "The Killing Times," that preceded the Revolution. So it was in Ayr; under the Hanoverian reign men could breathe freely, they could worship as they liked, and they were fairly prosperous and content; and the divine right of kings, so far as Scotland was concerned, had died for ever a natural death.

Song writers and romancists have gilded the Jacobite cause, till one is almost tempted to judge it by the glitter and the halo with which they have invested it; but when the posts, riding upon swift horses, brought word to the burgh town in the autumn of 1815 that the Highlands were aflame, that the fiery cross was out, and that the gathering pipes were sounding loud and sairly, the conscript fathers, and the community behind them, stiffened themselves for the conflict. They had had enough of Popery, they were in terror of it, and they were accordingly staunch for the Crown. There is a general, and not wholly an unfounded idea, that in these days, when as yet

the idea of reforming the Corporations was more than a century ahead, the Councils were everything and the people nothing. But this was not always so, for at almost every important stage, both of the rising of 1715-16 and also that of 1745, the Council of Ayr called the community together, and on almost every occasion considerably more than an hundred burghers reciprocated, and strengthened by their acquiescence the hands of the magistracy.

The Government wanted men and horses and arms, and Ayr had them in readiness. There were volunteers, and they numbered two companies, embracing in all about ninety men. It was on the 24th of September that they marched away. Six of the horsemen were from the Burrowfield, five were from Alloway, and the remainder from the royal burgh. That must have been a day of days in the history of the town, when the clattering horse-hoofs beat upon the causeway of the bridge, and when the townsfolk, high and low, old and young, cheered the men as they rode off. The composition of the force is interesting. The captains were John Vans and George Campbell; the lieutenants, Hew Craufurd and John Craufurd; the ensigns, Alan M'Crae and Archibald Hunter; and the sergeants, John Kennedy, Samuel Hannay, and Hew M'Ghie. In the town's record are enshrined the names

of the "private men" as well. It is worthy of note that the names, Christian and surname, were very much those most in vogue in the town to-day. The surnames included Fergusson, Paterson, Miller, Wilson, Hunter, Kennedy, Taylor, Clark, Jamieson, Logan, Watt, Murdoch, Craig, Blair, Burns, Shaw, Gray, Drennan, Young, Smith, Davidson, Campbell, Walker, Holmes, and Galt; and of the troopers, twenty-four were named John, fourteen William, ten James, five Andrew, four David, and three Robert.

The Town Council rose to the occasion. Not only did they resolve to fit out the men properly, but in recognition of their patriotism in responding to the call of their country, they ordered that each and all of them should be constituted freemen of the burgh; thus setting a precedent that was followed at the very close of the nineteenth century, when the volunteers for South Africa were similarly honoured. What the measure of their duty was we cannot say; but their loyalty must be measured by what they were prepared to do, and if they did not come into actual conflict with the "rebels," the supporters of the cause of the King "owre the water," it was because the tide of conflict did not roll their way. The rebellion was not long in being crushed; and the Council, "with hearts filled with gratitude to Almighty God, and love

and duty towards the King," begged leave to congratulate their most gracious liege on the success of his arms under command of his Grace the Duke of Argyle, "in the conquest of your enemies, and driving with disgrace a Popish pretender out of your kingdoms." This was in the latter end of January, 1716. The same day the Council had an opportunity of being merciful. While Ayr was intensely loyal, the town officer, David M'Gill, took the liberty of being a Jacobite. How he manifested what was tantamount to disloyalty is not recorded, but the Magistrates did deal with him, sentenced him to stand at the Fish Cross with a paper attached to his breast setting forth the extent of his offending, and otherwise resolved on degrading him. Luckily for David, however, he had influential friends in high places, and at the earnest request of one of these, the Earl of Kilmarnock, his punishment was commuted, on condition that he should leave the town within a given time, and return no more. If there were other Legitimists, as in all probability there were, they appear to have kept their views to themselves; at all events, they did not intrude them in such a fashion as to bring them into conflict with the reigning authorities.

The rising of the Forty-five found Ayr with a Town Council and with a community

Hanoverian and loyal. The presence of Charles Edward in Scotland, and the early successes that attended the march of the Highlanders into the south country, naturally created tremendous excitement among all sorts and classes of the people. Each town and district had to bear its share of the burden, both in men and in money. The royal burgh was held answerable for £173 3s. 3d. in cash, not by any means an exorbitant sum of money, when the circumstances are taken into account, and it was patriotically true to the cause of law and order, in men and munitions, and in horses as well. As one may learn from a perusal of the burgh records, the conscript fathers acted most energetically, and many were the meetings they held. The Provost, Thomas Garvine, received one day an important missive from his Grace of Argyle, telling of the crisis that had befallen, and of the need of resisting, in the cause of the Sovereign, the attempt of the Pretender—for so the heir to the glories of the Stuart race had come to be called in Scotland—to usurp the rights of sovereignty. Rumours were many of the marchings and the gatherings of the clansmen beyond the Forth; and the very name of the Highland Host was hateful to the Westland Whigs. For they had already had experience of the Highlanders when they had come south to punish the shire for its adherence

to the work of the Covenanted Reformation. The financial contribution was fixed "in proportion to the duties of excise arising out of the said town of Ayr." Without loss of time a committee was appointed to see what could be done. It consisted of the "Dean of Guild, Treasurer Auckenskeith, John Campbell (late Provost), Elias Cathcart (late Bailie), Patrick Ballantine, and Hugh Brown, all of the Council, together with James Montgomerie and James Hunter (late Provosts), William Ballantine, John Hunter, and John Gairdner (late Bailies), and Robert Anderson, Writer to the Signet." These met the same day, 5th October, 1745, and resolved "that the expresses be sent to Edinburgh, Dumfries, Sanquhar, Lanark, Linlithgow, Glasgow, and Renfrew, with horses, for information as to the present state of affairs." No time was lost in despatching these horsemen on the road That very day they were in the saddle, and no doubt their going was watched anxiously by the townsfolk, wondering, fearing, but resolute in resolve to keep out the Pretender, if so be that it was in their power, and opportunity so to do came their way. The Town Council were inclined to think that the sum the burgh had to pay was too large, and they sent James Hunter and Elias Cathcart to Edinburgh "as deputies to the Palace of Holyrood House, there

to settle and adjust the burgh's proportion of the contribution demanded of them," but when they got there they found that Andrew Hunter and James M'Derment, writers in Edinburgh, "doers for the town," had squared the account, and all they could do was to return to Ayr, and send in their bill for £6 18s. 9d., "including four horse hires," and receive the thanks of the Council for the service they had rendered to the community.

Things got no better in the country, and by the 9th of December, "the Magistrates and Council resolved and agreed that an edict be this day published through the town, by beat of drum, ordering all inhabitants of the burgh, burrowfield, and barony of Alloway, who had any of the town's arms in their custody, forthwith to restore and re-deliver the same to the town clerks at their office, with certification that if any of the said arms be found with them hereafter, they should be accounted stolen, and the havers punished according to law." And "the Popish Pretender and his abettors" being active in the stirring up of rebellion, and it being necessary to provide timeously "against any assaults made by them," James Hutcheson, William Gairdner, Patrick Ballantine, John Hill, William Ballantine, Joseph Milvain, James Harrow, and David Fergusson, the elder, were appointed to go through the several quarters of the town and

take up a list of able-bodied men, from sixteen to sixty years of age, and also to take "ane account of what arms each inhabitant have, and to report the twelfth instant, at ten of the clock beforenoon, and ordain the town officers to attend them." The list of available men was reckoned at 394 between the ages of sixteen and sixty, and they had among them 120 firelocks, besides swords, pistols, and bayonets, "some of which arms were not in order."

So threatening was the danger regarded, that "a general rendezvous" was ordered for four days later, under a penalty for non-appearance of five pounds Scots; and a proclamation to this effect was made by beat of drum, and was affixed as well to the door of the Old Church. The number who turned out was 346, and of the 131 firelocks they brought with them, "many" were "not fit for service." From the burrowfield there were 26 men with arms, and from the barony of Alloway came 41 men and 2 firelocks. By this time the Highland army was retreating from England to Scotland; and, thinking that it might come by the west coast and so trouble the burgh, it was ordained that a guard should be kept from that night, the 17th December, and onwards, and be continued during the pleasure of the Magistrates and Town Council, and that all the male citizens between sixteen and sixty years

of age should take their share in it. The Government, alive to the possibility of the same danger, sent a message to Ayr for arms and men; but Ayr had no arms to give. It had men, however, for the "conjuncture," and it made note of those whom it could send at a pinch, and when "the proper orders for their march" should be received. On the 19th December, the Council met with the community, represented by 121 townsmen, and resolved "that a company of foot, with officers, sergeants, corporals, and drum should be raised, and that a fund for their subsistence for forty days should be levied by voluntar subscription of the inhabitants, and that each privat man should be paid at eightpence per day for every day that he shall be exercised within the burgh with his arms, and the like for each day from his march from this burgh till his return." In addition, all the men comprising the company were to have the freedom of the burgh, "in terms of the Magistrates, Town Council, and community, their Acts yranent, 1715." And after what seems to have been the immemorial custom in such crises, a subscription was taken to pay the men and defray the expenses.

But by this time the rebellion had all but exhausted itself. It was not until the 10th of April that the rebellion was finally extinguished

at Culloden, but by the 14th of February the Magistrates and Town Council of Ayr, "in Council assembled, taking to their consideration the rebellion sometime agoe begun, and since carried on in the United Kingdom in favour of a Popish Pretender to the Crown of our rightful and lawfull sovereign, King George, and that the said wicked and unnatural rebellion is in a great measure extinguished by the rebels flying and dispersing before his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland," felt themselves justified, their hearts being "full of joy and gratitude," in commissioning and authorising Provost Garvain and Bailie Andrew Slowane to proceed to Perth, in order to offer the burghal congratulations to the Duke of Cumberland, and assurances of the burgh's loyalty and determination to defend the Crown and the country against all comers. This journey the Provost and Bailie Slowane lost no time in making, on horseback, accompanied by their servants, at a cost of £10 0s. 9d., and when they returned they reported that they had been most graciously received, and had been graciously permitted to kiss the royal hand.

In the story thus briefly and imperfectly told, one obtains an interesting sidelight into the ancient burghal life during an eventful and exciting period in the history of the country. There was no wonder that Ayr was excited. Its

memories of events under the Stuart dynasty were many, and there were far more shadows than lights in them. It had suffered, and it had enjoyed rest; and, Chevalier or Pretender, St. George or Bonnie Prince Charlie, it had nothing to gain, but much to lose, in backing either the one or the other against the crowned and lawful King. Ayr had an energetic Town Council, its conscript fathers did more than know their own minds—they knew as well the signs of the times and what the burgh ought to do. And they had the community behind them, a community whom they trusted, and that trusted them in return, that strengthened their hands and confirmed their intent, and that was ready at beat of drum to turn out, horse and man, and matchlocks and swords and bayonets, and speak if need be with the enemy in the gate. Their fear was of the power represented by the Pretender. He was more than a Stuart—he was a Papist as well—and Ayr knew with the rest of Scotland that a Stuart and a Papist constituted in these days a very untrustworthy combination. Beyond a doubt, there was many an anxious hour, and many a muster on the High Street causeway. The coming and going of the expresses, of the posts and riders, were events that must have set the burghers a-talking; and the riding forth of the civic dignitaries to Holyrood House, or to

Perth to greet the Duke of Cumberland, cannot have failed of stimulating the deepest interest. Human nature was the same then as now; and there must have been many alternate fears and hopes, and resolves and enthusiasms. Lack of determination there was none; neither variableness nor shadow of turning in the way that Ayr stood for the Protestant faith and the Protestant succession.

Ayrshire and the American War of Independence

It is not by any means an easy thing in these days to realise the intensity of the feeling that pervaded Great Britain during the lamentable period when the American War of Independence was being waged. Some idea, however, of the loyalty that pervaded all classes of the community may be gained from the Addresses to the King that were presented from the County of Ayr and the royal burghs of Ayrshire by their members in the House of Commons. The County Address ran thus :—

Address of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, etc., of the County of Air, presented by Sir Adam Ferguson, Bart. :—

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Address of the Noblemen and Gentlemen, Justices of the Peace, Freeholders, and Commissioners of Supply of the County of Air.

We, your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the noblemen and gentlemen, justices of the peace, freeholders, and commissioners of supply of the County of Air, called together by public advertisement, think ourselves bound in duty, in the present situation of public affairs, most humbly to approach your Majesty with this our unanimous Address, and to express our gratitude for those manifold blessings which we enjoy, in common with all our fellow-subjects, under your mild, just, and legal government.

While we thankfully acknowledge these blessings, we observe, with the most sincere regret, that the spirit of disaffection which has, for some time past, unhappily prevailed in several of your Majesty's Colonies in America, has now broke out into a daring and open rebellion; a rebellion the more unjustifiable, that your Majesty's declarations from the Throne, and the resolutions of Parliament, must have convinced every impartial man, that, so far from a wish being entertained to oppress your subjects in America, they might with certainty have depended upon every indulgence, if applied for in a proper manner, consistent with the dignity and just authority of the Sovereign and Legislature of both countries to bestow.

At the same time that we lament the infatuation which has led those deluded men to act in a manner so subversive of the peace and quiet of this great Empire, and so ruinous to themselves, we have such confidence in your Majesty as not to doubt that you will take the most effectual measures to support and maintain the constitutional rights of Great Britain.

In addressing our hopes of seeing the most efficacious means pursued for restoring good order and a due submission to Government, we have no object in view but the common happiness and prosperity of the whole State. As we are certain, from your Majesty's known clemency, that the punishment of your rebellious subjects will not be carried further than the prevention of such evils for the future, and the necessary maintenance of good government may require; so

we hope, from your Majesty's wisdom and that of your Parliament, that after peace and good order shall be re-established, those defects in the constitution of the Colonies, which have, in part, been the occasion of these unhappy disorders, may be corrected, and such a plan of government with regard to them adopted, as may be effectual to insure their obedience in time to come.

In this hope we would gladly flatter ourselves, that even those events, which appear most adverse to the prosperity of this great State, may, by being the means of establishing it upon a more solid foundation, tend, in the final result, to render it more permanent and secure.

In the meantime, Sire, a vigorous exertion of the power and authority of Great Britain appears clearly to us to be the only means by which these important ends can be attained. We trust your Majesty will exert it, and in so doing, your Majesty may be assured of our most hearty support.

Signed by order, and in presence of the meeting,

EGLINTON, *Preses.*

Air, Oct. 11, 1775.

The Town Council of Ayr memoralised thus in even more resolute fashion :—

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Address of the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of your Ancient Royal Burgh of Air, in common council assembled.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,—

We, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, beg leave unanimously to express our sentiments of gratitude for the many blessings we have enjoyed under your mild government ever since your happy accession to the Throne.

Being thus sensible of our own happiness, it is with horror and detestation that we behold the standard of rebellion erected in so many of your American provinces, and an unnatural war carried on by your subjects there, against their lawful Sovereign and Mother Country, after the greatest marks of lenity and condescension have been shown to them by your Majesty and the Parliament of Great Britain.

We sincerely lament the present situation of those unhappy and deluded people, who, instead of enjoying liberty, law, justice, and property as formerly, are now governed by the mob and rabble, headed by mad enthusiasts and desperate republicans.

We beg leave to assure your Majesty that we, and the inhabitants of this burgh, whom we represent, are ready to support, with our lives and fortunes, all such measures as shall be judged necessary by your Majesty and Parliament, to put a speedy end to this unnatural rebellion, and to disappoint the seditious practices of a discontented faction at home, who appear to have greatly encouraged and instigated the rebellion of the Americans.

That Almighty God may bless your Majesty's councils, give success to your arms; that a speedy peace and reconciliation may take place among all your subjects, and the further effusion of human blood be prevented; that you may have a long and prosperous reign over a free and happy people, is our sincere prayer.

Signed in name, and by appointment, of the Magistrates and Town Council of the burgh of Air, in common Council assembled, this nineteenth day of October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

JAMES HUTCHISON, *Provost.*

And Irvine was yet more resolute, defiant, and ready to die:—

Address of the Burgh of Irvine, presented by the Rt. Hon. Sir George Macartney, Knight of the Bath:—

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,—

We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Provost, Magistrates, and Council of your ancient burgh of Irvine, in Council assembled, reflecting with abhorrence upon the rebellious disposition of some of your Majesty's American subjects, and their unjustifiable attempts to oppose the laws of this realm, and to disturb the tranquillity of your Majesty's mild and merciful reign, which even the unthankful as well as we have experienced, humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty that as in the last war a large number of brave sailors from this port distinguished themselves in the glorious cause of your Majesty and their country, against natural and foreign enemies, so we have still numbers equally brave and willing to assist your Majesty and the laws, in reducing unnatural and unprovoked rebellion, in whatever part of your extended Empire it shall rear its head.

Deeply sensible of the blessings of that peace and liberty which we enjoy under your Majesty's auspicious reign; fully convinced of the uprightness of your Majesty's Government; and most firmly attached to your Majesty's person and family; we also assure your Majesty we are ready, on all occasions, to support and defend your royal person, and the Constitution of our country, with our lives and fortunes, against all foreign or domestic enemies.

Signed in our name, and by our appointment, at Irvine, the 22nd of September, 1775.

ALEX. MONTGOMERIE, *Provost.*

A PEN-AND-INK PICTURE OF AYRSHIRE

Low down in the soft grey west of the glorious land lies the old shire; a place of many a gleaming morn and many a darksome night; a place of rocky shores, of sounding bays, of seas that ripple on the yellow sands; a shire of misty heights, of little hills, of tree-clad altitudes; of meadows green, and daisied haughs and gowaned braes, flecked into life and brightness by the red and white cattle of the homeland; a shire of fields that in the waving grain give back the golden light, or bend like passing clouds when from the sea the winds come up and fan the fair bright corn; a place of rivers clear and dark that come from cloud-capped hills, and steal by rock and vale, or dash tumultuous over rocky beds, or bring their peat-stained tribute of the moors and mosses to give it back to ocean, source and mother of the many waters; a shire of lochs and tarns among the hills all bleak and bare, encompassed of the loneliness of crying muirland birds that love the solemn solitudes of the

eternal cliffs and crags, the desolate places of the wind-swept lands.

Weird are the tales that are borne of the whispering winds; weird the stories proclaimed of the rivers to the passing hours. If but the sun could tell what he has seen in his shining these thousands of years on the face of the travel-worn shire; if but the moon could unfold the records on which she has looked in her myriad wanderings over the fields, and the fells and the plains, then might the winds fold their pinions to listen, and the hasting rivers cease awhile in their courses to haste. For, once upon a time remote, no human voice was heard, no song of man or maid, no voice of laughing child or sound of love o'er all the wide expanse; and man cannot tell whence came the primal fathers, who they were, or in what tongue they spake, when, 'neath the sheltering shadows of the trees, they gazed upon the scene made ready for their advent through countless ages, or climbed the waiting hills and joyed to see the plains lit up by glowing suns of summer days, or wandered by the rivers or the shores of lochs uncleft of keel, or rested 'neath some rocky shade on sea-beat shore, and watched the sun go down in emerald or in molten gold behind the towering peaks of Arran's mountains of the mists and winds.

Here was their home, their rest, their refuge,

and their stay; here were their children born, and here they lived and loved and died, passing like shadows to the farther shores of life beyond. The years grew into hundreds, and the hundreds into thousands, and all the while they seethed with the seething of the unresting sea of Time, and shaped the changing shire with their travail and their pain, their fightings and their contendings; the purposes and plans of the Eternal, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday, or as a watch in passing night.

There were long-drawn days of sorrow,
  There was many a darksome night,
There was dule and gloom and trembling,
  There was crying for the light.

There were days of joy and gladness,
  There was laughter, there was mirth,
There was song and love and sunshine
  Breaking on a gladsome earth.

Life and Death, entwined together,
  Hope, despair, linked hand in hand,
Love and hate, and morn and midnight,
  Struggling for the struggling land.

Thus by trial, and by enduring, shires, as well as men, are made, and gladness springs from sadness, and happiness from pain.

A shire of old renown where History was made before recorded history was writ by pen in human hands. For, far back on the low horizon of a

distant age, came errant Celt to wrest the land from rugged Nature's reign. And Druid altars smoked in densest forest glades, and, baleful, sent to Heaven their smoking fires. Anon the Roman legions, from the tawny Tiber-side, came marching with the measured tramp of armed men, whose vessels were on all the seas, their foot on every shore—men of a wondrous race and place and time, who knew to make occasion and to take it by the hand; men who could live in war and fire and flood, in strain and stress, who ruled the world till they forgot to rule themselves, and passed away to join the mighty world-Powers that had afore strewn History's shores with ruins. And, following them came Celts, and other Celts in tribes and generations from beyond the gleaming Firth, to live their weary day and then to cease from labour. The lakemen came, through forest and by sedgy brake. Their rounded crannogs rose in towering strength in march and loch, strongholds for troublous times. Then, as the centuries in pain evolved their course, came Norsemen in their galleys, till upon the shore of Largs their might was broken by the serried ranks of bowmen and of spearmen, and strong-armed wielders of the battle-axe and sword, and the Vikings sailed away across the stormy northern main, never to return.

Here brooded long and fierce the spirit of a

nation's independence, until it burst the bonds that English hands had made, and Wallace brake upon the scene like mountain flood, and gave the haughty stranger from beyond the Tweed blow back for blow, until he reeled beneath the avenging stroke. Here Bruce smote hard upon the walls of rocky Turnberry, and wandered, hard bestead and lonely, Carrick hills and upland strengths, and heathy muirs that stretch across the shire all bare and desolate, until with gathering might he smote the English sore where Loudoun Hill stands sentinel o'er many a mile of wild and beauty, near, and to the furthest bounds of ken, and then he passed to other scenes of blood and victory, until he drave the foemen forth from Scotland, and the land was free down to this very hour. On and on rolled the evolving centuries in blood and fire and vapour of smoke, and Freedom called for other men and other sacrifice; and stern, strong men arose upon the westland shire, men of another sort than the old Catholic fathers, who, from the days of Saint Columba, saint of Icolmkill, lone isle of weary sea, in abbey hoar, in village church, in wayside cell and monastery, had kept alive the flame lit long before on Calvary. These claimed its rights for conscience, until, on stricken field, on heathy muir, in dungeon cold and dark, and at the enveloped stake, they wearied out the rage of cruel persecution, and, on the shattered

basement-stone of the old Catholic faith, they reared a simpler, sterner creed.

'Tis thus in war for home, in war for faith and freedom, and cruel strife of rival families, the ensanguined pages turn. Kennedy made feud with rival Kennedy, fierce and fell, and Eglinton waged sore and bloody conflict with Glencairn, the darkness lit by gleam of flaming peel and flashing keep; sorrow and sadness, ride and raid, and many slaughtered men; their fortunes rising and falling as rise and fall the ocean's tides. And Mures and Kerrs of courage high and desperate design, and Boyds and Campbells, Craufurds too, and Stewarts, maintained long, desolating strife, until the times rose up on feudal fray and bade it cease. And in the train of war came peace, and never more the night of sword and spear and shield, of driven lance and battle-axe, and wide-mouthed culverin; peace slowly spreading till, on all the plains, on all the mountain-tops, by all the streams and springs that run among the hills, the daylight broke, nor ceased to spread till darkest dell and broadest vale were radiant with the healing beams.

And broad across the shire the wondrous tale is writ; is writ on Roman road; on grass-grown circle, where the ancient Druid stood and offered human sacrifices to the god of day; in the foundations of the crannogs that were the homes

of lakemen; in the cairns and mounds of ancient sepulchre; in desolate walls and silent cells of the deserted abbeys; in castles that have crumbled to the touch of Time until the green grass and the softening, mantling ivy have shrouded them in beauty, or that raise their walls, strong built and bare and massive, to the free-winged winds, the haunts and homes of little birds that sing all careless of the memories through which they fly, and rear their callow brood; in massive keeps and peels, that rise erect and buttressed as of old they stood, whose dungeons yet remain to tell what scenes they saw, what piteous sounds they heard when captives, safe immured within their gloomy strength, sighed long and sad for freedom and the daylight of the sunny world without; whose walls unconsciously bespeak assault upon the barbican, and the rude, oaken beams driven fell upon the splintering doors; through whose long corridors, to sympathetic sigh of night winds, steal living memories and pallid ghosts of History that fain would speak had one but ears to hear them; and nameless shades that have all but merged in Time, yet loath to leave the scenes that once they loved so well.

Thus and thus the story goes of the shire low down in the west,
Thus and thus the story goes of the shire I love the best,—
Shire of the clustering memories, fanned by every passing breeze,
Sung by the flowing rivers and the voice of the breaking seas;

Thickening memories, clustering memories, memories gay and glad,
Memories grim and ghastly, and memories wan and sad.
And there's never a true-born son of the shire, or worthy her storied past,
Who does not take her to his heart and cling to her hard and fast,
Loving her, and remembering that her life is his very life,
That his is her stormy story, that his is her wrestle and strife;
And as he would honour his mother, or honour the name of his sire,
So it becomes him to honour the fame of the dear old western shire.

THE END

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